

Mesa Community College

**Self-Study
Report
2005**

Submitted to
The Higher Learning Commission
of the North Central Association
of Colleges and Schools



**MESA
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**

Mesa Community College

Self-Study Report 2005

For continued accreditation with

**The Higher Learning Commission
of the North Central Association of
Colleges and Schools**

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
1	Introduction and Accreditation History	1
	Organization of the Report	1
	Profile of Mesa Community College	4
	History of Mesa Community College and Accreditation	8
	Significant Institutional Changes Since 1995	9
	Responses to Challenges from Previous Team Reports	11
	Summary	21
2	The Self-Study Process	23
	Approach to Accreditation Criteria	23
	Committee Structure	24
	Goals of the Self Study	25
	Conducting the Self Study	26
	Preparation of the Report	28
	Communication Strategies	28
	Resources for the Self Study	29
	Summary	30
3	Mission and Integrity	31
	Introduction	31
	<i>Core Component 1a: Clear and Public Documents</i>	31
	Mission Review Process	32
	Vision Statement	33
	Mission Statement	33
	Values Statements	36
	Strategic Plan	37
	Student Learning Goals	37
	Dissemination	38
	<i>Core Component 1b: Recognition of Diversity</i>	38
	College and District Practices that Promote Diversity	39
	<i>Core Component 1c: Support for the Mission</i>	44
	<i>Core Component 1d: Governance and Administration</i>	45
	Governing Board	45
	District Administration	47
	College Administration	48
	Shared Governance, Policy Groups, and Committees	51
	<i>Core Component 1e: Integrity</i>	54
	Non-Discrimination/Affirmative Action	55
	Fiscal Integrity and Oversight	55

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
	Dealings with Internal Constituencies	57
	Dealings with External Constituencies	58
	Co-curricular and Auxiliary Services	59
	Publications	59
	Summary	60
	Strengths and Challenges for the Future	60
4	Preparing for the Future	63
	Introduction	64
	<i>Core Component 2a: Planning for the Future</i>	65
	Department Planning	66
	College Operational Planning	68
	Strategic Planning	68
	Master Planning and Bond Planning	70
	<i>Core Component 2b: Organizational Resources</i>	71
	College Budget	71
	Revenue Budget	72
	Expenditure Budget	73
	Bond Referendum	74
	Investment in Technology Resources	75
	Investment in Human Resources	79
	Investment in Professional Development	80
	Investment in the Physical Environment	82
	Investment in Quality Educational Programs	84
	<i>Core Component 2c: Evaluation and Assessment</i>	85
	College-wide Student Outcomes Assessment	86
	Program Review	86
	Program and Service Evaluations	87
	Institutional Effectiveness Indicators	88
	Other Evaluation Activities	89
	<i>Core Component 2d: Planning and Mission</i>	90
	Summary	90
	Strengths and Challenges for the Future	91
5	Student Learning and Effective Teaching	93
	Introduction	93
	<i>Core Component 3a: Goals for Student Learning</i>	94
	Overview of MCC's College-wide Assessment Program	94
	History of the Assessment Program	96
	Assessment of General Education Outcomes	97
	Assessment of Career and Technical Program Outcomes	100
	Assessment of Developmental Education	101

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
	Use of Assessment Results	102
	Evaluating the Assessment Process and Program	102
	Indirect Measures of Student Learning	104
	Classroom and Course Level Assessment	105
	<i>Core Component 3b: Effective Teaching</i>	<i>106</i>
	Faculty Professional Development	107
	Center for Teaching and Learning	108
	Faculty Evaluation and Recognition	110
	Faculty Role in the Curriculum	111
	Faculty Credentials and Qualifications	113
	<i>Core Component 3c: Learning Environments</i>	<i>115</i>
	Environments Support Teaching and Learning	116
	Environments Enrich Campus Life and Culture	117
	Environments Foster Inclusiveness and Diversity	120
	Environments are Enhanced by Current Learning Technology	124
	Environments are Continuously Evaluated and Improved	128
	<i>Core Component 3d: Learning Resources</i>	<i>129</i>
	The Library	129
	Learning Enhancement Center	130
	Writing Center	132
	Laboratories	132
	Summary	133
	Strengths and Challenges for the Future	133
6	Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge	135
	Introduction	135
	<i>Core Component 4a: Life of Learning</i>	<i>135</i>
	Planning and Budgeting to Promote Continuous Learning	136
	Professional Development Opportunities	138
	Modeling a Life of Learning	139
	Freedom of Inquiry	140
	Scholarship and Research	140
	Recognizing Academic Achievements	143
	<i>Core Component 4b: Breadth of Knowledge</i>	<i>145</i>
	General Education	145
	College-Wide Student Learning Outcomes for General Education	148
	Curricular and Co-curricular Linkages	150
	<i>Core Component 4c: Usefulness of Curricula</i>	<i>152</i>
	Knowledge and Skills for the Workplace	153
	Currency and Relevancy of Courses and Programs	154
	<i>Core Component 4d: Responsible Use of Knowledge</i>	<i>157</i>

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
	Developing Responsible Use of Knowledge	157
	Practicing Social Responsibility	158
	Responsibility in Research and Practice	158
	Summary	159
	Strengths and Challenges for the Future	160
7	Engagement and Service	161
	Introduction	161
	<i>Core Component 5a: College Constituencies</i>	<i>162</i>
	Commission on Excellence in Education	163
	Program Advisory Councils	164
	Changing Demographics Project	164
	Center for Community Education	166
	<i>Core Component 5b: Capacity and Commitment</i>	<i>168</i>
	Center for Service Learning	168
	Center for Public Policy	169
	Extended Campus	170
	The Arts and Other Community-Oriented Events	170
	The Rose Garden	171
	<i>Core Component 5c: Responding to Constituencies</i>	<i>172</i>
	K-12 Partnerships	172
	University Partnerships, Articulation, and Transfer	175
	Business & Industry Institute/Network Academy	177
	Specialized Career and Technical Programs	178
	MCC Downtown	178
	<i>Core Component 5d: Valuing Services</i>	<i>179</i>
	Summary	180
	Strengths and Challenges for the Future	181
8	Federal Compliance	183
	Higher Education Reauthorization Act	183
	Disclosure of Campus Crime and Graduation Rates	185
	Credits, Program Length, and Tuition	185
	Visits to Off-Campus Locations	186
	Advertising and Recruiting Materials	187
	Record of Student Complaints	187
	Summary	188
9	Summary and Request for Continued Accreditation	189
10	Glossary of Terms and Acronyms	191

List of Tables and Figures

		PAGE
Table 1-1	Ten-Year Trend in Number of MCC Students by Site as of Fall Semester High Point	6
Figure 1-1	Ten-Year Trend in MCC Enrollment and Full-Time Student Equivalent Enrollment (FTSE) as of Fall Semester High Point	7
Table 1-2	MCC Student Characteristics Fall Semester High Point 1995 and 2004	7
Table 3-1	MCC Employees by Gender and Race/Ethnicity Fall 2004	40
Table 3-2	MCC Employees, Maricopa District Employees, MCC Students and City of Mesa Residents by Race/Ethnicity	41
Table 4-1	Alignment of MCCCCD Strategic Directions and MCC Strategic Planning Goals	65
Figure 4-1	College Strategic Plan	66
Table 4-2	MCC Fiscal Comparisons Fiscal Year 1993-1994 and Fiscal Year 2003-2004	73
Figure 4-2	MCC Expenditure Budget by Functional Classification FY 2003-2004	74
Figure 4-3	MCC Expenditure Budget by Object Code FY 2003-2004	74
Table 4-3	MCC Faculty Survey Results Satisfaction with Technology Spring 2004	78
Table 5-1	Summary of Student Assessment Results 2001-2004	99
Table 5-2	MCC Faculty Survey Results Responses to Assessment Items Spring 2004	103
Table 5-3	Highest Degree Earned by MCC Full-Time and Adjunct Faculty Fall 2004	114
Table 5-4	MCC Faculty Survey Results Satisfaction with Learning Technologies and Support Spring 2004	125
Table 5-5	MCC Student Computer Use Survey Results Comparisons from 2000 and 2003	126

		PAGE
Table 5-6	MCC Distance Learning Student Survey Results Spring 2004 and Fall 2004	127
Table 6-1	MCC Professional Growth Expenditure Comparison Fiscal Year 1998-1999 and Fiscal Year 2003-2004	137
Table 6-2	MCC Faculty Survey Results Responses to Professional Development Items Spring 2004	138
Table 7-1	New High School Graduates Attending MCC the Following Academic Year 5-Year Trend	172
Table 7-2	Profile of Students Enrolled in MCC REACH Program Fall 2004	173
Table 8-1	Student Loan Default Rates at MCC for Most Recent Three-Year Period	184

Chapter 1

Introduction and Accreditation History

- Organization of Report
- College Profile
- Accreditation History
- Significant Changes
- Responses to Challenges



Chapter 1

Introduction and Accreditation History

- Organization of Report
- College Profile
- Accreditation History
- Significant Changes
- Responses to Challenges



This self-study report is submitted by Mesa Community College (MCC) as formal application for continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association. The primary purpose of the report is to provide members of the visiting team with background information needed about the college in order to conduct an effective comprehensive evaluation visit. A number of other important constituents are audiences for the report: current and potential students, faculty members, staff, administrators, community members, district leadership, governing board members, and the public at large.

The report provides a comprehensive and public view of the college that reflects its mission and values, how these are carried out through programs and services, and how they are measured, documented and reviewed through ongoing evaluation efforts. For members of the college community, the report provides a framework and foundation for the continuous examination and improvement of programs and services to meet the diverse learning needs and expectations of its constituencies. It becomes a living document to be incorporated into an existing process of planning for the future and allocating resources in accordance with that planning. The self study was conducted using the new accreditation criteria specified by the Higher Learning Commission as part of the Restructuring Expectations Project.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

Chapter 1 of the self-study report provides an introduction to the report, a profile of Mesa Community College today, and a brief accreditation history of the college. This chapter also describes significant changes since the 1995 evaluation team visit and explains how the college responded to the challenges noted in team reports for the last comprehensive visit and the institutional change focused visit for the new Red Mountain branch campus.

Chapter 2 describes the self-study process, the college's approach to the new criteria, the goals of the self study and the committee structure.

The criterion chapters are organized around the Core Components delineated under each criterion. These chapters include information describing how MCC meets the accreditation criteria consistent with its mission, provide supporting evidence, and conclude with a discussion of the strengths and challenges for the future related to the criteria. The five accreditation criteria are addressed in Chapters 3 through 7, as follows:

Introduction and Accreditation History

Chapter 3: Criterion 1, Mission and Integrity

Chapter 4: Criterion 2, Planning for the Future

Chapter 5: Criterion 3, Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Chapter 6: Criterion 4, Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

Chapter 7: Criterion 5, Engagement and Service

Chapter 8 addresses how MCC meets Federal Compliance regulations, and Chapter 9 includes a formal request for continued accreditation. A glossary of terms and acronyms is provided in Chapter 10.

Evidence is cited throughout the report to support stated claims or assumptions about how a particular college program, service, or activity demonstrates that a criterion is met. As the self study was undertaken, guidelines were established for what constitutes evidence and these were used by the committees as they completed their evidence gathering and analysis work. The guidelines include the following:

- Evidence is relevant – clearly and directly related to the question of interest.
- Evidence is verifiable – can be documented and replicated.
- Evidence is representative – typical of the college, not an isolated case or incident.
- Evidence is cumulative – corroborated or reinforced by a variety of sources.

Thus, a single data point, opinion or perspective was not viewed as evidence. Rather, through the triangulation method, committee members looked for a number of data sets, documents, or reports about a given topic to create patterns to support a claim. Sources of evidence cited in the report are noted in parentheses, and all evidence is available in the resource room. The most commonly cited surveys, evaluation measures, and college documents include the following:

Survey results:

- Student Assessment of the College Environment (SACE)
- Student Computer Use Survey
- Distance Learning Student Survey
- Faculty Survey
- Non-faculty Employee Survey
- Community Leaders and Partners Survey

Facilitated discussion group results, including discussion groups conducted with:

- Deans' Council
- Faculty
- Commission on Excellence
- Student Leadership
- Professional Staff Association
- Maintenance and Operations and Crafts Staff

Interview results:

- College President Interview
- Department Chair Interviews
- Director and Manager Interviews

College reports and documents:

- Strategic Plans
- Annual Student Assessment Reports
- Institutional Effectiveness Report
- Institutional Research Reports – (enrollment, demographics, staffing, etc.)
- Budget Documents
- College Catalogs
- Class Schedules
- Student Handbook
- Residential and Adjunct Faculty Handbooks
- Policy Manuals

Introduction and Accreditation History

PROFILE OF MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mesa Community College (MCC) is the largest of the colleges in the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). The District is comprised of ten separately accredited colleges and two skill centers in Maricopa County. The county, which includes the city of Phoenix and the surrounding metropolitan area, is one of the fastest growing in the nation and is home to more than three million residents. The Maricopa Community Colleges, led by Chancellor Rufus Glasper, are governed by an elected governing board of five members. In fiscal year 2003-04, more than 275,000 residents of Maricopa County participated in credit and non-credit course offerings district wide at one of the colleges or skills centers. Organizational charts illustrating the relationship between the District and the college, as well as organizational charts for MCC are included in Appendix A.

Mesa Community College, led by President Larry K. Christiansen, serves a large portion of an urban/suburban area known as the “East Valley,” with a population of approximately 850,000 residents. The college’s primary service area encompasses all of the city of Mesa, most of the city of Tempe, and parts of Chandler and Gilbert. MCC is a comprehensive community college offering transfer education, career and technical programs, developmental education, continuing and community education courses, and business and industry training. Students can pursue a wide range of educational goals through more than 130 academic, career, and certificate programs and more than 120 credit classes available online. Non-credit students enroll in a wide array of community and continuing education offerings at numerous college locations.

The college is comprised of two comprehensive campuses and Extended Campus. MCC’s main campus is located on the corner of Southern Avenue and Dobson Road, on the western border of Mesa, Arizona, a suburb of Phoenix. The second comprehensive campus, MCC at Red Mountain, is located 14 miles northeast of the main campus at the corner of McKellips and Power Roads in northeast Mesa. Red Mountain was developed under the auspices of the “one college, two campus” model, a growth strategy new to the Maricopa District. This model is different in that, rather than initiating new separately accredited colleges, growth is met by developing comprehensive branch campuses that share resources and services with the existing main campus.

MCC classes are also offered through Extended Campus at the Downtown Center at Country Club and Brown, Williams Campus, Tempe High School, several other high school sites, and over 30 other locations (for example, clinical sites for nursing). The Business &

Industry Institute, which is home to the Network Academy, is located at the Downtown Center at Centennial Way; it provides a wide range of credit and non-credit high technology courses and programs. Boswell Hospital in Sun City, Arizona hosts a nursing program. A map of the region showing the locations of the main campus, Red Mountain campus, and key off-campus locations is included in Appendix B.

The MCC expenditure operating budget for FY2004-2005 was \$70 million, allocated as follows: 58% for instruction, 12% for academic support, 8% for student services, 8% for the physical plant, 7% for general institutional, and 7% for administrative costs. The college revenue budget is funded from the following sources: 58% property tax, 24% tuition and fees, 11% state aid, 5% fund balances, and 2% miscellaneous.

Bond monies are used to fund large technology, capital improvement and construction projects at the 10 Maricopa Colleges and two skill centers, and there is a history of strong voter support for district-wide bond initiatives. Most recently, the Maricopa District placed a \$951 million bond referendum on the November 2004 election ballot; this bond was passed with 76% of Maricopa County voters supporting it. MCC's share of the bond monies is \$111 million. The bond and related implications are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

MCC has 679 full-time employees including 324 residential faculty members, 218 professional staff, 82 management and administrative personnel, and 55 maintenance and operations staff. More than 900 adjunct faculty members taught part time in fall 2004. The college consists of more than 50 buildings at various sites – all of which are well equipped, maintained and designed to meet technological demands. For instance, all faculty, staff and administrators can access technology from their own workstations, totaling approximately 1,500 desktop computers. With over 2,800 computers in labs and classrooms at five MCC locations, students have easy access to a myriad of technology services including current instructional hardware and software, business applications, email, and the Internet. Students can access technology both inside and outside the classroom and through a variety of modes, including wireless. Such technology experiences help prepare students for further study at other institutions and for tomorrow's job market. Technology is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Mesa Community College students can choose from a wide and diverse transfer curriculum that includes four transfer degrees: Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Associate in Business, and the Articulated Transfer Partnership degree – all of which incorporate the 35

Introduction and Accreditation History

credit hour Arizona General Education Core (AGEC). Students seeking technical expertise in a specific occupation or career can pursue 48 different Associate in Applied Science Degrees and 82 Certificates of Completion that prepare them to enter the workforce. Students whose educational goals require flexibility can pursue an Associate in General Studies degree. Continuing and Community Education programs provide hundreds of non-credit classes to meet the lifelong learning needs of the community, and the Business & Industry Institute provides customized non-credit corporate training for the local business community.

In the past decade, fall credit enrollment grew by 5,532 students - a 25% increase.

In fall 2004, 27,834 credit students were enrolled at all MCC locations; this enrollment represents a full-time student equivalent (FTSE) of 15,126. In the past decade, fall credit enrollment grew by 5,532 students – a 25% increase. This is consistent with the growth in the surrounding metropolitan area. Table 1-1 below shows the student enrollment trend for the past 10 years by site and illustrates the distribution patterns of students over time. Historically, and for purposes of planning and decision making, the college has used fall high point headcount for all comparison trend data; high point is the last day of the drop/add registration period.

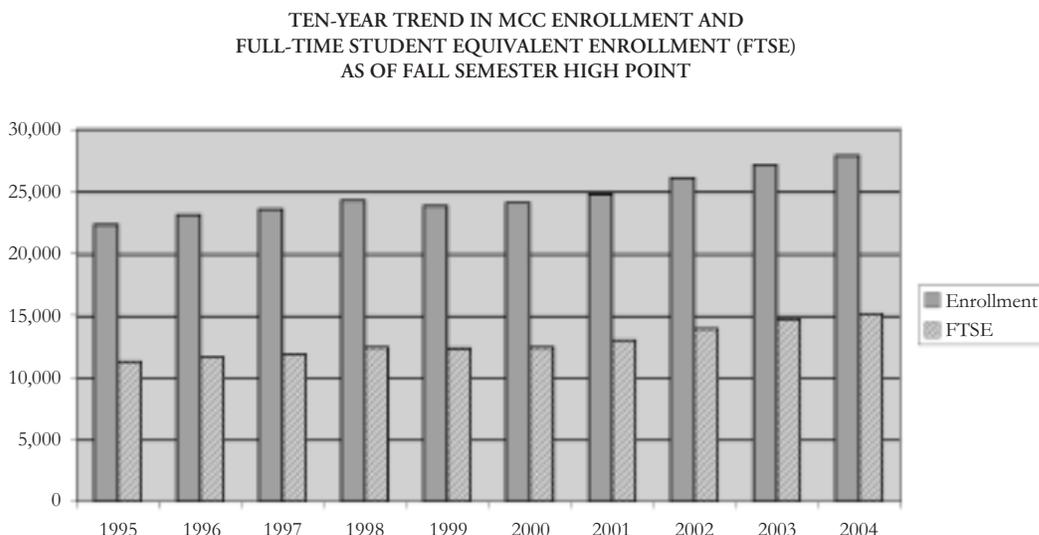
Table 1-1

TEN-YEAR TREND IN NUMBER OF MCC STUDENTS BY SITE AS OF FALL SEMESTER HIGH POINT								
	Total Unduplicated Student Count	Southern & Dobson	Red Mountain	Downtown @ Centennial	Downtown @ Brown	Internet	Williams Center	ASU Research Park
Fall 1995	22,302	22,302	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fall 1996	23,108	22,708	-	1,188	-	-	291	220
Fall 1997	23,536	22,655	846	1,571	-	478	204	370
Fall 1998	24,228	22,689	791	1,506	-	665	160	271
Fall 1999	23,787	20,886	977	978	1,043	982	159	232
Fall 2000	24,042	21,152	1,537	1,271	1,155	1,215	138	216
Fall 2001	24,762	21,082	2,462	629	1,297	1,605	124	103
Fall 2002	26,089	21,731	3,432	445	1,265	2,316	162	129
Fall 2003	27,108	22,514	3,741	360	1,175	2,705	247	122
Fall 2004	27,834	22,704	3,904	306	1,177	3,210	259	n/a

Data is for credit enrollment as of fall high point. Does not include all enrollment for late start courses. Counts are duplicated across sites; a student is counted at each site he or she attends. Some enrollment changes by site reflect changes in programmatic offerings at the location.

Figure 1-1 below illustrates college-wide high point enrollment and full-time student equivalents (FTSE) over a 10-year period.

Figure 1-1



Student goals and backgrounds at MCC are diverse. For credit students enrolled in fall 2004, 62% plan to transfer to another college or university; 27% are taking courses to prepare to enter the workforce, improve skills for present jobs, or change careers; and 11% are taking classes primarily for personal interest. The average age of credit students is 26 years old and their ethnic-racial background is as follows: 66% White, 15% Hispanic, 4% Black, 4% Asian/Pacific Islander; 3% American Indian/Alaska Native; 8% other or unspecified. On average, students take eight credits per semester, 63% attend part time, 53% are female, and 47% are male.

Table 1-2

MCC STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS FALL SEMESTER HIGH POINT 1995 AND 2004		
Student Characteristic	1995	2004
<i>Enrollment Status</i>		
Full-time	31%	37%
Part-time	69%	63%
<i>Intent</i>		
Intend to transfer	50%	62%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	47%	47%
Female	53%	53%
<i>Age</i>		
Average age	26	26
24 years old or younger	55%	61%
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>		
White, not Hispanic	74%	66%
Hispanic	11%	15%
Black, not Hispanic	3%	4%
American Indian	3%	3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%	4%
Other or not specified	4%	8%

Several characteristics of the student population have changed over the past 10 years; most prominent among these are an increase in full-time students, increase in students intending to transfer, and increases in ethnic diversity. The changing ethnic profile of MCC students reflects increases in surrounding cities and in the state and nation. Changes in student profile are illustrated in Table 1-2. (See Resource Room: Student Enrollment and Student Profile.)

Introduction and Accreditation History

HISTORY OF MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND ACCREDITATION

Mesa Community College was founded in September 1963 as an extension of Phoenix College, the first of the Maricopa Community Colleges. MCC began with an enrollment of 330 students and an academic program consisting of general college transfer courses. By an act of the Governing Board two years later, MCC became a separate college and offerings were expanded to include business, technology and nursing programs. MCC originally was accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NCA)¹ under the umbrella of its “parent” college, Phoenix College. It received separate and independent accreditation in 1967; subsequent accreditations were conducted by NCA in 1977 (for eight years), 1985, and 1995. In 2001, the college submitted a request for institutional change to the HLC requesting approval to add the Red Mountain campus as a degree-granting branch campus and a focused visit was conducted. Formal notification from the Commission was received in 2001 and stated that “the Institutional Actions Council voted to extend [MCC’s] accreditation to include a new branch campus.” (*See Resource Room: Self-Study Reports and Request for Institutional Change.*)

The college has experienced continuous and rapid growth since its first enrollment of 330 students. By fall 1975 almost 12,000 credit students were enrolled; this grew to approximately 17,000 students in fall 1985, over 22,000 students in fall 1995, and almost 28,000 students enrolled today. Correspondingly, the number and variety of programs has increased to meet the demand for a full array of academic transfer courses and degrees as well as numerous career and technical programs and comprehensive developmental education offerings.

General education and university transfer were the focus of the college when it was founded and continue to be central to the mission and academic life. Due to MCC’s close proximity to Arizona State University, a large research university located only five miles away in Tempe, a strong partnership has thrived and continues to evolve as both institutions grow and become more diverse. Many students attend ASU Main and East campuses while they are also enrolled at MCC. Rich and varied workforce development partnerships are also a vital part of MCC’s history and its future. Up-to-date

General education and university transfer were the focus of the college when it was founded and continue to be central to the mission and academic life... Up-to-date career and technical programs... are critical to MCC’s higher education role in the community.

¹ Since 2000, reference to the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association has shifted from NCA to HLC.

career and technical programs that prepare students to enter the workforce contribute to the economic development of the region and are critical to MCC's higher education role in the community. The Business & Industry Institute meets the corporate training needs of many employers in the region, and non-credit offerings through the Center for Community Education provide community members with hundreds of personal interest classes throughout the year.

SIGNIFICANT INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES SINCE 1995

The past decade at Mesa Community College has been one of dramatic change – change in terms of explosive growth, student demographics, new program development, new technology, and new expectations from constituents both internal and external. MCC not only responded to, but anticipated and prepared for, these changes by setting bold and forward-thinking institutional priorities centered on organizational learning and continuous improvement. Outside the college, social and economic factors, a rapidly developing urban region, demands for accountability, technological advances, and globalization all shaped how the college defines itself, its programs, and its future. Inside the college, a spirit of change and innovation has been the prevailing force driving programs, services, and student learning for the 21st century.

The past decade at Mesa Community College has been one of dramatic change - change in terms of explosive growth, student demographics, new program development, new technology, and new expectations from constituents both internal and external.

Some of the most significant changes of the past 10 years include the following:

- Planned and built the MCC at Red Mountain campus; requested and received HLC approval for opening Red Mountain as a branch campus. By fall 2004, student headcount enrollment at Red Mountain was 3,904.
- Built the Paul A. Elsner Library and increased library collection allocations to ensure access to current and relevant electronic and print information.
- Built a new state-of-the-art life science building that includes eight flexible science laboratories; also made significant renovations to existing facilities and grounds at the Southern and Dobson campus.
- Designed and implemented a nationally recognized comprehensive student outcomes assessment program.
- Implemented a comprehensive strategic, operational, and departmental planning and budgeting process.
- Experienced 25% enrollment growth with a concomitant increase in the number of faculty and staff.

Introduction and Accreditation History

- Increased student access to education through over 120 distance learning courses enrolling over 3,000 students; established faculty mentoring and course development programs to ensure the quality of distance courses.
- Established Extended Campus in order to expand off-campus course offerings and locations.
- Developed new career and technical programs in response to changing needs of the workforce, including BioTechnology, Network Administration, Information Security, Veterinary Technician, Mortuary Science, Graphics Arts, and Studio Recording.
- Developed new partnerships with business and industry such as a Fire Science program for professional fire fighters in metropolitan fire departments, and the Caterpillar Technician Program for western states developed in partnership with Southwest Empire Corporation.
- Responded to changing demographics of the community and student population by developing programs and services for a growing Spanish speaking population such as the Changing Demographics Initiative, ESL Student Support Services, and Bilingual Nursing programs.
- Expanded international education through study abroad programs in Ireland, Mexico and China; established initiatives with Koning Willem I College in The Netherlands and the Higher Colleges of Technology in the United Arab Emirates; improved services for international students; initiated numerous curricular changes to internationalize the curriculum.
- Expanded the facilities, staff, and role of the Center for Teaching and Learning, a center dedicated to faculty and staff development.
- Planned and implemented the New Faculty Experience and the New Employee Orientation programs to acculturate new employees to the college.
- Increased student access to technology through creation of numerous specialized computer laboratories; the number of computers in labs and classrooms grew from fewer than 500 in 1994 to almost 3,000 in 2004.
- Created MyMCC Portal to improve student and faculty access to course-related information and learning technologies and increase student-faculty communications.
- Improved college business practices by implementing a new online financial system, payroll system, and library information system; initiated plans to implement a new student system.
- Redefined the mission of the Office of Research and Planning to place

greater emphasis on using data for decision-making, strategic and operational planning, student outcomes assessment, data analysis and dissemination, program evaluation, and institutional research.

- Significantly expanded the Commission on Excellence in Education, a community advisory board, to increase community partnership and outreach efforts.
- Received voter support for a \$951 million Maricopa District bond referendum; MCC's allocation of \$111 million will help ensure the college's ability to complete capital projects and meet the needs of a growing population.

RESPONSES TO CHALLENGES FROM PREVIOUS TEAM REPORTS

The challenges noted in the 1995 visiting team report became major institutional priorities for the college over the past decade. Not only have such challenges been addressed, in many cases they have become areas of recognized excellence both within and outside the college community. As examples, strategic planning, student outcomes assessment, and a state-of-the-art library are now well established cornerstones of the institution. The challenges stated during the last comprehensive team visit and the institutional change focused visit, and summaries of how MCC has responded to them, are outlined briefly below. These topics are also addressed in subsequent chapters of the report, which include supporting evidence of achievement and implications for the future.

Challenge: "There is a perception of faculty and staff that, although there are ample data, committees, and meetings, a more meaningful communication network among college administration, faculty, and staff should be established to clearly define and clarify issues affecting the college."

Establishing "a more meaningful communication network" has been a major priority for the college since the 1995 team visit, particularly in light of the addition of a branch campus and a number of other community-based sites. One indicator of MCC's commitment to enhanced communication is its inclusion as one of the 12 college strategic goals which states: "Encourage open communication among all members of the college community." The ultimate goal is to improve awareness about important college agendas and to increase participation in the decision-making process about substantive issues of concern to the college. To this end, numerous communication mechanisms have been established or improved over the past 10 years.

Introduction and Accreditation History

Primary among these, and an important mechanism for college-wide communication and participation, is the strategic, operational, and departmental planning process. This process is highly participatory and involves the majority of college personnel. Involvement occurs through serving on formal college committees or through less formal participation at the individual department level. The college's planning process is described in detail in Chapter 4.

“Strategic Conversations” are held once each semester for the purpose of providing an open forum about issues related to the college's mission, strategic direction and goals. Strategic conversation topics are directly related to the college strategic goals; feedback is gathered from participants about how the goals can be accomplished through departmental or college-wide initiatives. The conversations are widely publicized, and a significant effort is made to have strong representation from all employee groups, students, and the community. These events are well attended and have become a regular expectation of the MCC community; many are held at both the Southern and Dobson and Red Mountain campuses. Information gathered from the conversations is used as feedback for the continuous evolution of the college strategic plan and for specific college improvement activities.

(See Resource Room: Strategic Conversations.)

The president regularly hosts Brown Bag Lunches to engage employees in topics of importance to the college community. Recent topics have included planning for the bond and developing a more prominent college presence in downtown Mesa. The president also conducts annual department visits that are designed to foster two-way interaction between members of the various departments and the college president. The President's Weekly Communique, sent via email each Tuesday, provides updates to the internal community about current topics and recognizes employees for special honors or awards. *(See Resource Room: President's Communique.)* The President's Leadership Team, comprised of administrators from all administrative units at the college as well as employee group leaders, meets weekly to share information about district agendas and priorities and to provide input about important operational and strategic issues at the college. In addition, The Dean of Instruction regularly hosts events for groups of faculty to engage in discussions about teaching, learning and curricular issues. The various college departments also hold regular meetings to discuss related operations, issues and initiatives.

Two departments within the college play key communication roles. The Office of Institutional Advancement has grown considerably over the past 10 years and is responsible for a number of formal college publications and communications as well as media relations, public relations, and alumni relations. The Office of Research and Planning enhances

communication by widely disseminating important institutional research data and publishing key documents such as the Strategic Plan, Effectiveness Indicators, Fast Facts, and Research Briefs. This information sharing enhances participation in college decision making. Considerable investments have been made in improving the quality of key publications such as the college catalog, schedule, and student and faculty handbooks, thus improving access to information for students, faculty, staff and the community.

Virtually all key written communications and publications are also easily accessible electronically through the college website. Some communications, such as the new TechConnect, which provides updates on important college-wide technology topics, are available only electronically. Email is used extensively as a communication tool to provide up-to-date information and provides a mechanism to dialog about timely college topics. Moreover, a variety of events or socials have been created to promote informal communications among and across employee groups.

According to a fall 2003 employee survey, these and other communications initiatives have had an impact on college communications. For example, the majority (71%) of employees agreed or strongly agreed that they receive adequate information regarding important college activities and initiatives, more than half (52%) agreed or strongly agreed that open communication about important college issues is practiced. Communication is key to continued success – especially in light of the multiple sites, increasing size and growing complexity of the college. Thus, building open and effective communication is an ongoing priority for MCC.

Challenge: “The college needs to seek solutions which will enhance student success in light of Mesa’s open door admissions policy, such as finding an approach to developmental education.”

An open door admissions policy is central to the community college philosophy and allows access to higher education for individuals who, for a number of reasons, otherwise might not have access. Ensuring or optimizing the success of these many and diverse students requires investing in significant academic and student support services, a focus at MCC for the past decade.

Consistent with district policy, MCC uses the ASSET (or COMPASS, the computerized version) placement tests to ensure proper course placement in reading, writing and mathematics. District policy specifies the particular guidelines and requirements by which

Introduction and Accreditation History

students are tested. (*See Resource Room: College Catalog.*) Placement test results are used to advise students whether they are prepared to be successful in college-level work in each of those areas; they are not used for mandatory placement as students may sign waivers. Each fall approximately 10,000 students are tested at MCC and each spring the number is about 5,000. Trend data show that about 30% of the students score such that they place into a below 100-level writing class or reading class. About 40% of students taking the most basic (i.e., numerical skills) mathematics test place into a below 100-level mathematics class. (*See Resource Room: ASSET Reports.*) MCC facilitates student success regardless of placement test scores or the student's decision whether or not to follow recommended placement. All students, especially those placing in below-100 level courses, are encouraged to seek additional academic support outside the regular classroom in order to enhance their education.

A full-time Faculty Director of Learning Enhancement was hired in 2001 and charged with expanding and enhancing tutoring services for MCC students at all college locations. Tutoring services have increased significantly since that time, with increases in staff, the disciplines for which tutoring is available, and accessibility through expanded hours and locations. The Learning Enhancement Center (LEC) provides services in seven locations: Elsner Library, Math/Science Learning Center, Music/Theatre Cluster, Physical Science Building, Reading/ESL Lab, Academic Skills Lab, and the Red Mountain Library. In order to continuously improve, the LEC collects a wealth of data from students receiving tutoring services, including student usage and demographics and formal evaluations of tutors, services, and the program as a whole. Annual reports documenting the total number of student visits for tutoring services showed an increase from 6,123 visits in fall 2001 to 11,190 visits in fall 2003. Student evaluations of LEC services conducted in academic year 2003-2004 showed high student satisfaction with their tutoring services. Some examples of findings include the following: 89% reported they are more confident learners as a result of tutoring; 85% reported they are more likely to stay in college as a result of tutoring; and 82% reported their study skills improved. (*See Resource Room: Learning Enhancement Center.*)

The Writing Center, co-located with the LEC in the Elsner Library, provides professional English tutors who assist students in developing writing skills such as structuring papers and writing essays and research papers. The Writing Center serves students seeking writing assistance for any discipline. The Disability Resources Office, Veteran's Services, American Indian Center, Multi-Cultural Services, Transfer Center, and Career Services Center are other examples of areas providing intensive student services designed to improve student retention and academic success.

Special targeted services for underprepared students have been expanded considerably, along with increases in funding and staffing levels. The Academic Skills Lab has been established specifically to provide individual tutoring, specialized computer software to supplement classroom instruction, and individual and group study space for students enrolled in developmental (i.e., below 100-level) English, English-as-a-Second-Language, and reading courses. Course completion data show that 56% of students enrolled in developmental classes in fall 2003 successfully completed the course with a grade of A, B, or C. When students who successfully completed are tracked into subsequent 100-level courses, 74% successfully completed one or more subsequent courses within three semesters. (*See Resource Room: Focus on Effectiveness.*) Plans are to incorporate conversation circles and opportunities for cultural and social awareness for ESL students, thus, further enhancing the developmental education program.

Course offerings and support services for English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) students have been diversified and enhanced. The Intensive English Program, for example, is designed for international students and immigrant students who want to learn English in a concentrated timeframe. It offers the option of fast paced and intensive 8-week courses in English grammar, reading, listening and speaking, and writing for students seeking intensive daily study.

Institutional effectiveness indicators show these efforts have produced positive results. For example, overall successful course completion at the college has steadily increased over the past five years (from 68% in AY1999-2000 to 71% in AY2002-2003), the number of degrees awarded has steadily increased, and the number of students transferring to Arizona universities climbed from 1,507 in 1998 to 1,871 in 2002. (*See Resource Room: Focus on Effectiveness.*)

Challenge: “There is a concern that Mesa Community College lacks a consistent strategic planning process that enables meaningful participation by faculty and staff.”

In order to address this concern, the college – under the leadership of a new Dean of Instruction – developed an initiative in 1996 to establish a comprehensive and participatory college-wide strategic planning process. Since then, MCC Strategic Plans have been developed, published and widely disseminated annually, the latest being *Focus on Learning: MCC Strategic Plan 2004-2007*. (*See Resource Room: Strategic Plans.*) Strategic planning at MCC today is a dynamic, collaborative, and continuous process that sets the future direction for the college.

Introduction and Accreditation History

The planning process relies on regular assessments of the internal and external environments of the college, many of which are provided by the Office of Research and Planning. Results are used by the Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of 22 individuals representing all employee groups and administrative areas of the college, which continuously reviews the plan to ensure that it reflects a viable direction for the future. Individual departments use the Strategic Plan as a roadmap for developing their annual department operational plans that ensure the strategic planning goals are achieved. Each spring, departments submit their major accomplishments for the year and align these with the goals in the Strategic Plan. This provides documentation about how the strategic goals are being accomplished.

An annual operational planning cycle has been established at the individual department and unit level throughout the college. Each fall, department chairs and unit managers develop plans for their respective areas that include new departmental initiatives, alignment of the initiatives with the college strategic planning goals, and the operational and capital funding needed to support the initiatives.

Ninety-one percent of residential faculty and 66% of non-faculty employees reported in a 2004 survey that they have been appropriately involved in their department's planning activities.

In 2001, a new committee (Operational Planning and Budgeting Committee) was formed to ensure participation in the college-wide operational planning process. The committee includes representatives from all employee groups and administrative areas. Members review the individual departmental plans and synthesize them into an overall plan for each administrative area (instruction, student services, administrative services, and president's office) and subsequently into an overall college operational plan. These plans drive decisions for resource allocation.

(See Resource Room: Operational Plans.)

A wealth of data was collected as part of the self study to document the efficacy of the planning process. To cite some examples, 91% of residential faculty and 66% of non-faculty employees reported in a 2004 survey that they have been appropriately involved in their department's planning activities. And 68% of all employees responding to the survey agreed that the college effectively prepares for the future through its planning process. *(See Resource Room: Faculty and Non-Faculty Employee Surveys.)* Chapter 4 presents an extensive discussion of relevant evidence related to college planning and a critical evaluation of it.

Challenge: “The Assessment and Continuous Improvement Plan 1995 submitted as part of the Mesa Community College self study is not acceptable.”

Related to this concern, the college was required to submit a revised student assessment plan and follow-up progress report. That report, outlining progress the college had made toward refining the assessment plan as well as progress on initial implementation, was accepted by the Higher Learning Commission in August 1997. Since that time, MCC’s student assessment program has evolved well beyond fulfilling these initial requirements. Student outcomes assessment has been a major priority at the college and has evolved over the past decade into a nationally recognized model. Developed and led by MCC faculty, with leadership and support from the Dean of Instruction and staff in the Office of Research and Planning, the student assessment program has become one of the cornerstones of MCC’s academic program.

Student assessments are conducted at all levels within the college: classroom, course, and program. Every course in the Maricopa District course bank has stated learning competencies which are approved through the formal district curriculum process. At the classroom and course levels, faculty members are responsible for regular assessment of student achievement of these course competencies. Individual faculty members have the freedom to customize the competencies to their specific courses, emphasizing particular student learning objectives and/or adding objectives to the agreed-upon competencies. Many faculty members have participated in faculty development and use a variety of classroom assessment techniques at the classroom level. In many courses, a number of faculty members teaching the same course coordinate assessment of competencies at the course level through common finals, common final projects, or other assessment methods.

The major focus of the MCC student outcomes assessment program is at the program level and includes annual college-wide assessment of seven general education outcomes, workplace skills, and developmental education. In addition, program reviews include identification and assessment of program-specific student learning outcomes for career and technical programs. The purpose of the college assessment program is to systematically document and improve student learning at the program level. Assessment results are incorporated into the college’s annual departmental planning and budgeting process.

The majority of MCC’s full-time faculty and a large number of adjunct faculty have been actively involved in some aspect of the development and/or implementation of the assessment program. The learning outcomes for general education and workplace skills

Introduction and Accreditation History

In a 2004 survey, 80% of residential faculty agreed or strongly agreed that student outcomes assessment is viewed as part of the college culture.

developed by faculty are assessed during an annual Assessment Week held each spring. A cross-sectional research design allows the comparison of the performance of students who are beginning their program of study with students nearing completion of their program. Developmental education is assessed at the end of the final course in the developmental sequence each semester. Over the past two years, the emphasis of the assessment program has shifted from implementation to the use of results for the improvement of teaching and learning.

In addition to direct measures of student learning, the college also regularly collects indirect measures of student outcomes. These include student opinion surveys, graduate surveys, performance on external licensing exams, course completion, university transfer, and performance after transfer which are regularly collected and analyzed.

Student outcomes assessment at MCC has evolved from a “not acceptable” plan in 1995 to being a cornerstone of academic life at the college today. In a 2004 survey, 80% of residential faculty agreed or strongly agreed that student outcomes assessment is viewed as part of the college culture. Student outcomes assessment, use of results, and related evidence is discussed in considerable detail in other sections of the report, particularly in Chapter 5.

Challenge: “The Learning Resource Center’s cataloged holdings and annual collection budgets are much too low to address present and future student needs.”

A walk through the new Paul A. Elsner Library at almost any time of day is testament to its central role as the academic heart of the college. Students can always be found working individually and in groups, referencing print and electronic resources, and preparing research reports and class projects.

Since the last comprehensive team visit in 1995, there has been a dramatic expansion of library holdings, buildings, and services. At the time of the visit, the college library was small and had not expanded to keep up with the explosive growth in the student population. One result of the passage of a 1994 bond initiative was the construction of the college’s 94,000 square foot Paul A. Elsner Library, which opened in 1999. The space of the MCC Southern and Dobson library increased from a 36,000 square foot building to a 92,000 square foot building with three floors and 1,145 reader seats. The new library was accompanied by significantly increased funding for the collection, technology resources, and full-time librarians and support staff. At that time the annual collection allocation for the

library was doubled from \$100,000 to \$200,000. An additional annual allocation of \$15,000 was designated for the Media Department to enhance the college's media collection. Funding allocations have also enabled libraries at both campuses to replace one quarter of their public computers each year in accordance with a computer replacement plan.

The \$200,000 allocated for building the library collections is designated for the purchase of materials for the collections of both the Elsner Library and the library at Red Mountain. The collections of the two libraries are viewed as a unit when providing library services to MCC students. The collection at the Southern and Dobson campus currently holds 77,360 print volumes; this is compared to 68,000 volumes in 1994. Before moving to the Elsner Library in 1999, a major weeding project designed to remove older, seldom used materials from the collection was accomplished. Since then, in order to maintain a current and usable collection, weeding has been an ongoing process. In addition to the print collection, library users have access to 850 electronic books, 530 periodical subscriptions, and 53 reference and periodical databases. Patrons at the Red Mountain Library have access to a print collection of 6,516 volumes and 181 periodical titles as well as the electronic books and databases.

Over 350 public computers are available in the Elsner Library, with an additional 71 computers in the Red Mountain Library. Wireless computer access allows patrons to work on personal laptop computers in the libraries and other locations at both campuses. Library reports indicate that patron visits at both libraries during AY2002-03 exceeded 350,000. In the year 2000, remote access to the libraries' resources was made available. This method allows users access to the library catalog with college-specific holdings, all major library databases, and the interlibrary loan process for requesting materials from off campus locations. Students now also have access to online reference services which are especially helpful for students enrolled in distance learning classes.

In addition to providing direct learning resources for students, the Elsner Library is also home to the Southwest Reading Room that houses a special collection of southwest literature and accommodates academic events such as speakers, forums, readings and meetings throughout the year. A large Community Room provides space for gatherings for internal and external community groups.

Library personnel regularly collect usage and service data, and overall library services are evaluated through the Student Assessment of the College Environment (SACE) survey. (*See Resource Room: SACE Survey.*) This survey, administered in fall 2000 and again in fall 2003, revealed a high level of student satisfaction with "the quality of the library/learning resource

Introduction and Accreditation History

center” (mean score of 4.13 in 2000 and 4.03 in 2003 on a 5-point scale). (See *Resource Room: Learning Resources files*. Also see *Appendix C for Basic Institutional Data forms*.) Chapter 5 includes a complete discussion of the library as a learning resource and evidence relevant to it.

Challenge (Red Mountain Focused Visit): “Though the institution currently has a functional organizational model/reporting structure, expected enrollment growth without continued planning efforts could strain efficient communication and decision making in the future.”

This challenge was noted in the HLC team report after a focused visit conducted in 2001 in response to the requested institutional change to add the Red Mountain campus as a full service degree site. MCC has addressed this challenge in a number of ways. The expected rapid enrollment growth at the Red Mountain campus has been realized, with a fall 2004 credit enrollment of 3,905 students. Organizationally, the “one college, two campus” model has driven the reporting structure at Red Mountain, meaning that a second administrative structure was not replicated to support the campus. Rather, college deans, associate deans, and department chairs are responsible for all departments and support services at both comprehensive campuses. As the Red Mountain campus expanded, several college-wide administrative functions were housed primarily there. For example, the Associate Dean of Administrative Services is housed at the Red Mountain campus and supervises fiscal, information services, media services, college safety, and maintenance and operations staff there as well as fulfilling college-wide responsibilities. An Associate Dean of Student Services is also housed at Red Mountain and oversees all student services at the campus.

For the instructional area, the Dean of Instruction spends one day each week at the Red Mountain campus, and the three Associate Deans of Instruction each spend one alternate day at the campus, thus ensuring that academic affairs and issues needing administrative actions or decisions are addressed. The Acting Associate Dean of Instruction: Director of Red Mountain campus oversees daily operational instructional issues. Department chairs visit the campus regularly to meet with faculty and tend to operational concerns within individual departments. As the college grew, considerable additional responsibility was placed at the department chair level. In academic year 2003-2004, an “assistant chair” pilot program was initiated to assist department chairs with these additional responsibilities, as well as to improve student access, day-to-day operational procedures, business practices, and class scheduling. Assistant chair responsibilities include supervising and evaluating adjunct faculty and support staff, representing Red Mountain in strategic and departmental planning, advising department chairs on scheduling, resolving student complaints, and signing required forms. Five assistant chairs were selected for these positions. The pilot

program was formally evaluated at the end of the year and results showed that support for the program was strong; therefore, it was continued, expanded and refined for academic year 2004-2005. (See *Resource Room: Red Mountain Assistant Chair Evaluation*.)

Mesa Community College has clearly addressed all previous challenges noted in the 1995 visiting team report as well as the focused visit regarding institutional change for Red Mountain. The college has developed greater communication strategies and continues to build on those; improved opportunities for student success through numerous new programs and services; established and adheres to a consistent strategic planning process; implemented a comprehensive program to assess student learning; invested in a new learning resource center, holdings and collections; and established an effective organizational structure at the Red Mountain campus.

SUMMARY

Mesa Community College is a different place than it was 10 years ago. While upholding its valued traditions and reputation for excellence, the college has moved forward with bold initiatives and priorities that will position it for the future. The development of a second comprehensive campus, a systematic and dynamic planning process, new programs to meet changing socioeconomic and workforce trends, and a student outcomes assessment program are just some of the ways the college has changed. The college community is focused on the primacy of learning, not just for students but for employees and its many diverse constituencies, as its most fundamental value.

Chapter 2

The Self-Study Process

- Approach to Accreditation Criteria
- Committee Structure
- Goals of the Self Study
- Conducting the Self Study



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The Mesa Community College (MCC) Self Study was conducted to prepare for the college's fourth comprehensive accreditation visit by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. The self-study process allowed the college community to examine itself in relation to accreditation criteria, to provide evidence about those criteria, and to identify strengths, challenges, and future directions. Most importantly, the self study provided the entire college community an opportunity to reflect upon MCC's accomplishments and potential.

APPROACH TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

Consistent with the HLC's Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ) accreditation process, MCC conducted the self study using the new accreditation criteria: (1) Mission and Integrity, (2) Preparing for the Future, (3) Student Learning and Effective Teaching, (4) Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge, and (5) Engagement and Service.

Mesa Community College is one of the first to use the new criteria defined by the Higher Learning Commission. The approach to the criteria was first to seek a common understanding of them and determine how they apply to the college and its mission. To this end, early in the self-study process committee members wrote interpretations of the criteria and components that reflected their collective understanding. These interpretations then guided all subsequent phases of the committee work.

While the college practices the HLC's cross-cutting themes of being future-oriented, learning-focused, connected, and distinctive, the themes were not used as the organizing framework for the self study or the report. Rather, MCC's own college values – learning, inclusiveness, excellence, and community – had more direct relevance for the self study and in fact are the characteristics that make the college distinctive. Thus, references to the MCC college values are threaded throughout the report.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the focus of the self study work was to determine and demonstrate how the college fulfills the five criteria and their components. The examples of evidence published in *The HLC Handbook of Accreditation* provided a frame of reference for what might constitute MCC's evidence, but the examples are not addressed point by point in the report. Each component was addressed holistically and includes the examples of evidence most reflective of this college's fulfillment of the components. In instances where similar information is relevant to more than one chapter, sections are cross-referenced within the report.

The Self-Study Process

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Dr. Gail Mee, Dean of Instruction, provided the administrative leadership for the accreditation process and Dr. Gayla Preisser, a faculty member in the Psychology Department, served as the self-study coordinator. They worked closely with Andrea Greene, Associate Dean of Instruction for Research and Planning, and the staff of the MCC Office of Research and Planning to coordinate the self-study effort. The full self-study committee was comprised of over eighty persons grouped into individual committees organized around the criteria, distance learning, operational indicators, and communications and arrangements. Most of these committees had co-chairs or tri-chairs and 10-15 committee members.

A Resource Team, consisting of the Dean of Instruction, self-study coordinator, and the Associate Dean of Instruction for Research and Planning, provided leadership and coordinated daily operations related to the self study. The Self-Study Steering Committee, comprised of members of the Resource Team and chairs of all remaining committees, guided and directed the work of the self study. There were five criteria committees. Each interpreted their criterion and components, identified evidence that would be needed, evaluated findings, and wrote working papers. The Distance Learning Review Committee was charged with evaluating the college's readiness to request an institutional change to offer a distance learning degree. Although the committee recommended that the college not move forward at this time with such a request, they will continue the work necessary to prepare for a Request for Institutional Change in the future. The Operational Indicators Committee prepared data to respond to operational indicators and basic institutional data forms. The Communications and Arrangements Committee provided support for internal and external communications, events, and publications about the self study. See the self-study organizational chart and committee member list in Appendix D.

Broad representation, skills, and individuals' roles within the organization were considered in selecting committee members and committee chairs. Considerations included:

- Identifying people who have experience and expertise with the area being studied;
- Ensuring group diversity, including diversity of gender and ethnicity as well as of thought and opinion;
- Involving people representing a range of administrative areas, departments, and employee groups (Faculty; Management, Administration, & Technology; Professional Staff Association; Maintenance and Operations; Crafts);
- Involving employees who are new to the college as well as veterans.

In addition, there were a number of opportunities for student, adjunct faculty, and community involvement. These included representation on committees, self-study surveys and interviews, panel discussions, strategic conversation meetings, internet communications and community forums.

GOALS OF THE SELF STUDY

The goals of the MCC self study emerged from a collaborative activity involving the entire Self-Study Committee during a February 28, 2003 meeting. From this activity the goals were drafted, approved by the Self-Study Committee, and subsequently presented to and endorsed by the college Leadership Council. The five resulting goals provided a focus and framework for the self-study work. The goals and related explanation of each are stated below.

1. *Achieve 10-year accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association.*

Through the self-study process, the preparation of the self-study report, and the site visit from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association team, Mesa Community College will attain accreditation for 10 years without the stipulation of progress reports, monitoring reports, or focused visits.

2. *Confirm that our college practices and actions are aligned with our statements of vision, mission, values, and strategic directions.*

The college has made a considerable investment over the past 10 years in implementing a strategic and operational planning process, reexamining and revising our mission and vision, and affirming our college values. Through the self study, we will validate the continuing viability of the vision, mission, values, and strategic directions. We will also ascertain whether we are putting these statements into practice, to what degree, and in what ways. We will identify new ways to accomplish our vision, mission, and values and recommend revisions to current practices to better align with them.

3. *Document the college's strengths and challenges, capitalizing on our strengths and systematically addressing our challenges.*

By conducting the self study and critically analyzing our entire college organization, we will document our many strengths and assets and share them with our internal and external constituents. We will become aware of our challenges and develop effective strategies for addressing them.

The Self-Study Process

4. *Develop a strong sense of community through communication, collaboration, and connectedness among all college constituencies.*

Our self study brings together people representing all aspects of college life to work together for the common good of the college. This process itself is a tool for all facets of the college to communicate, examine our common purpose, and reaffirm our connections to each other and the communities we serve. It will also help us to develop ways to become better communicators and collaborators.

5. *Position the college for the future.*

Through the completion of the self study we, as members of the college community, will have a clearer picture of who we are presently and of what we need to do to better position ourselves for the future. The self-study report will provide a foundation upon which we can continually build and improve over the next decade.

CONDUCTING THE SELF STUDY

The self-study process was designed to be highly collaborative and participatory and to capitalize on the expertise and talents of members from the college community. The need to be systematic and well organized was also recognized. Thus, early in the planning phase the steering committee was cognizant of the need to build a common understanding of accreditation and the self-study process, educate participants about their roles and tasks, and develop a process and structure to facilitate the work.

Several activities were designed to build an understanding of accreditation and the self-study process. In January 2003 then-HLC liaison to MCC, Cecilia Lopez, addressed the committee about accreditation and the new criteria. In January 2004 Mary Breslin, MCC's current liaison, visited the campus and discussed characteristics of a good evaluative self study with committee members. A team of 14 people representing all of the individual committees attended the 2003 Annual Meeting of the Higher Learning Commission; another team of 10 people attended the 2004 Annual Meeting. Members of the resource committee also attended a number of HLC-sponsored accreditation workshops.

In order to educate committee members about their roles, a charge for chairs was developed, educational materials were prepared, self-study notebooks were created, and a series of informational Powerpoint presentations were given. All committees met regularly throughout the two-year self study. Individual committees identified their tasks and

established their operating procedures and schedules. Materials and supporting documentation about the process are available on the self-study website. (*See Resource Room: Self-Study Process.*)

A timeline for the self-study process was developed and regularly updated; it was followed throughout the duration of the self study. The initial charge to the criterion committees was to analyze and interpret their criteria in relation to MCC's mission, culture and environment. Committee members began their work by discussing, reaching a common understanding of, and writing interpretive statements about each of the criteria and component statements. They examined questions such as "What does this statement mean to you?" and "How does this statement relate to MCC's self study?" The intent was that committee members personalize the criteria and consider MCC's distinctiveness and culture in relation to them. The members then used their collective expertise to identify examples of evidence needed to document and, most importantly, critically evaluate how the college fulfills the criteria and components. Several worksheets were developed which aided the committee members in their tasks. These included an Interpretation of Criterion and Components Document, Examples of Evidence Worksheet and Requests for Evidence Form which are shown in Appendix E. (*See Resource Room: Self-Study Process.*)

Over the past several years, the college has relied upon regular and systematic analysis of trend data, effectiveness indicators, and a comprehensive strategic planning process. For example, throughout the academic year institutional research reports are prepared, learning outcomes are measured, surveys are administered, and strategic conversations are conducted. Results from these ongoing activities were critical to the work of the criterion committees. In addition to existing evidentiary data, the committees developed requests for additional evidence and a comprehensive data collection plan was developed and implemented. The data collection approach included a number of strategies already in place as part of the college's ongoing commitment to evaluating its effectiveness. Existing relevant documents and reports were compiled and others were gathered from departments and units college wide. Other data collection activities were specifically targeted toward documenting fulfillment of the criteria. These included:

- College-wide strategic conversations about the criteria were held at both campuses;
- Faculty and non-faculty employee surveys were conducted;
- A community leaders survey was conducted and discussion groups were held;

The Self-Study Process

- Facilitated discussions with faculty, non-faculty employees, and student groups were held;
- Department chairs and directors of non-academic departments were interviewed;
- A student opinion survey (Student Assessment of the College Environment) was conducted.

Several principles guided the fall 2003 data collection process: adherence to good research and evaluation practice, sound methodology, verifiable or empirical approaches, and commonly applied analysis methods. The goal was to obtain credible data that committee members could then interpret and evaluate in relation to MCC's mission. See Appendix F for sample data gathering instruments (sample surveys and discussion questions).

PREPARATION OF THE REPORT

Throughout spring 2004 committee members reviewed, synthesized, interpreted, and evaluated the data and relevant college documents and wrote working papers to be used in the report. The working papers were submitted to the resource committee in summer 2004, and from these the first draft of the full report was prepared. Throughout this process, the resource committee was in contact with criterion chairs to ask questions and clarify content as needed. In October 2004, a first draft of the report was disseminated to the full committee as well as to the deans and president. Individuals provided feedback about the report using an online form. While the first draft was under review, appendix materials and other supporting documentation were prepared. Using the feedback from this review cycle, a second draft was prepared, posted on the web for college-wide review, and sent to the graphic designer for formatting. In addition, it was sent to an outside reader, an administrator at another community college. The final report and appendix were sent for printing in early January 2005.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

The stated communication goal for the self study was “to educate, inform, and garner enthusiasm for MCC's self-study process by effectively communicating and engaging MCC's internal and external community.” To accomplish this goal, a communication plan was developed and a graphic identity was designed for use on all publications and materials. Some of the major communication tools included a self-study newsletter published twice each semester and disseminated to all internal and key external constituents; a self-study website; regular email updates to the internal community; regular reports to the Commission on Excellence, the college's community advisory group; regular announcements

in the President's Communique; and distribution of promotional items such as pens, notepads and calendars. (*See Resource Room: Self-Study Process.*)

Information about the accreditation self study was shared at college-wide events such as convocations and all-faculty meetings. The self-study coordinator met several times with the department chairs at their regular meetings and also met with Faculty Senate, Student Services Leadership, the Professional Staff Association, and the Maintenance and Operations/Crafts group. At each of these meetings information about the purpose and status of the self study was shared and input and feedback was collected. Presentations about accreditation and the college's self study were included in the New Faculty Experience and new Adjunct Faculty Orientations. Students were kept informed and had opportunities to contribute through venues such as student leadership meetings, club meetings, and the student newspaper. Exhibits for key display areas at both campuses were also arranged. A call for public comment was published in local newspapers, in the student newspaper, and on the self-study website. (*See Resource Room: Third Party Comment.*)

RESOURCES FOR THE SELF STUDY

The self study could not have been accomplished without the allocation of resources; at MCC, a charge center was created so that these resources could be formally allocated and tracked. The faculty self-study coordinator received full reassigned time to coordinate and facilitate the many self-study meetings and events as well as the activities associated with writing the report and preparing for the HLC team visit. An administrative assistant was assigned to the self study to provide administrative support. An existing conference room at the college was converted into the "Self-Study Work Center" which provided a central location for administering the process, assembling resource materials, keeping files and support documentation, and accommodating needed meeting space. As needed, faculty members serving on committees received special contracts (during the summer) or reassigned time (during the academic year) to work on self-study tasks. Additionally, numerous non-faculty employees dedicated significant time to the self-study effort. The staff of the Office of Research and Planning spent a considerable amount of their time working on instrument development, data collection, analysis, and reporting for the self study. Resources were also allocated for printing, postage, supplies, and travel.

The Self-Study Process

SUMMARY

The self study has been an opportunity for the college community to reflect on its mission and values, to take stock of its accomplishments, celebrate its successes, and identify the areas that present challenges for the future. Almost everyone at the college has been involved in the process in some way, and many have noted how much they learned and the connections made with people they otherwise may have never met. Most importantly, the self study has focused the college community on its purpose as an institution of higher learning and its standing in relation to the Higher Learning Commission's criteria. Through the interpretation of these criteria within the unique context of MCC's mission, and critical evaluation of how the college fulfills them, the college is prepared to use the self study as an important tool as it looks to the future.

Chapter 3

Mission and Integrity

- Vision, Mission and Values
- College Mission and Diversity
- College-wide Support for the Mission
- Governance and Administrative Structures
- Operating with Integrity



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- Vision, Mission and Values
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- Governance and Administrative Structures
- Operating with Integrity



Criterion 1: Mesa Community College operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

INTRODUCTION

MCC's mission documents demonstrate the college's clear sense of purpose, and the ideals promoted in them are fulfilled through structures, policies, and processes at both the college and district levels. The words in these documents are realized through MCC's commitment to teaching and learning, diversity of programs, planning and budgeting processes, community partnerships, shared governance and decision making, fiscal responsibility, and compliance with legal standards and codes of ethics. College mission documents are consistent with, and help to accomplish, the mission and values articulated for the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). (See *Resource Room: MCCCDD Governance Policies*.) The purpose of this chapter is to describe and present evidence demonstrating how Mesa Community College fulfills Criterion One.

Core Component 1a: Mesa Community College's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.

MCC's mission signals to internal and external communities what they can expect from the college. At Mesa Community College the vision, mission and values represent the ideals and views of the people who work at the college, the students, and external constituents. These statements are the result of a series of participatory consensus building events involving broad representation from members of the college community, and they provide the foundation for the development of college goals. Hence, it is not surprising that 83% of all employees agree that MCC's mission documents appropriately describe the role and priorities of the institution. (See *Resource Room: Faculty and Non-Faculty Employee Surveys*.)

MCC's mission documents, viewed in the broadest sense, include the college vision, mission, values, strategic plan, and learning goals for students. The vision, mission and values provide the basis for the goals and priorities articulated in the college strategic plan and in the student learning goals which enable the college to fulfill the mission; the vision, mission and values documents are the focus of this chapter. Detailed discussions of the strategic plan and student learning goals and their relationship to the mission are included in Chapters 4 and 5. The college mission documents are clearly stated, publicly available, and consistent with those of the Maricopa County Community College District.

Mission and Integrity

MISSION REVIEW PROCESS

MCC's mission has been revisited regularly since the college was founded. Most recently, the college community embarked on a process to articulate shared values for the first time. This process was conducted under the auspices of the MCC Strategic Planning Committee, a representative college committee that planned the activities and served as the review entity.

The values process commenced in fall 2000 with a college convocation keynote address by Dr. Mel George, president emeritus of the University of Missouri. Dr. George is well known for his work in the field of ethics and values in education, and he provided guidance and advice for the duration of the process. The Strategic Planning Committee spent the fall semester becoming educated about the nature of "organizational values;" they developed working definitions of values that were shared with the college community and served as a reference for subsequent events. Committee members developed a plan for completing a process that would result in a set of shared college values representing the collective thought of the internal college community and its key stakeholders. Several activities were central to completing the values statements, including:

- The college's spring 2001 convocation theme was "Beginning our Conversation on Values," which included an employee panel discussion and follow-up activity.
- Communications and presentations were designed to educate the college community about the characteristics and purpose of publicly articulating values.
- A series of strategic conversations and discussion groups were held that engaged faculty, staff, students, and community members in formulating the values.
- Analysis, synthesis, and a timely turnaround of the data gathered in these events allowed for a series of college-wide review, feedback and revision cycles.

Following the establishment of MCC's values, a similar process for reexamining the vision and mission statements was undertaken. This too was a participatory process involving faculty, staff, students and community members who engaged in a revision of the college vision and mission. By spring 2002, the college values along with the revised vision and mission were published and distributed college wide. These are prominently displayed throughout all college facilities and published in all key publications.

VISION STATEMENT

Mesa Community College will be a leader among community colleges, providing an innovative and intellectual learning-centered environment that is responsive, adaptable, and inclusive.

- MCC Vision Statement

Central to MCC’s vision is an intellectual and learning-centered environment that is innovative, responsive, adaptable, and inclusive. These themes in MCC’s vision statement are recognized characteristics of the college, as evidenced by a number of survey results. A large majority (83%) of all employees agreed that the “college supports innovation in teaching and learning.” (See Resource Room: Faculty and Non-Faculty Employee Surveys.) Among community members, 92% strongly agreed or agreed “MCC is innovative and adaptable.” (See Resource Room: Community Leaders and Partners Survey.) Nearly all (96%) of the respondents to this survey agreed or strongly agreed that the college is responsive to the changing needs of the workforce, and 92% agreed that the college meets the needs of diverse constituents.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Mesa Community College is to promote excellence in teaching and learning, preparing individuals for active citizenship in a diverse global society. The college is a community resource for transfer education, career preparation, developmental education, economic development, and continuous learning. Our ultimate purpose is to improve the quality of life in the community we serve.

- MCC Mission Statement

As demonstrated throughout this report, there is much evidence the college is fulfilling its stated mission – both in the programs and services provided and in the outcomes and accomplishments that result from them. As one example, administrative leaders identified “excellence” in instructional programs as a major strength of the college – and at the core of upholding MCC’s mission (See resource Room: Dean’s Council Discussion Group Results.) An examination of the interview data from academic department chairs reveals numerous examples of “promoting excellence in teaching and learning.” When asked “What sets MCC

Mission and Integrity

apart from other institutions of higher learning?” every department chair made reference to one or more of the following: quality and dedication of faculty; vision and support for teaching, innovation, technology, learning and cultural opportunities; and the exceptional resources and opportunities for students to engage, interact and learn. (*See Resource Room: Chair Interview Results.*)

Mesa Community College's commitment to preparing individuals for active citizenship in a diverse global society is evidenced through an inclusive curriculum and opportunities for civic engagement.

Mesa Community College's commitment to preparing individuals for active citizenship in a diverse global society is evidenced in the many opportunities for civic engagement. These are exemplified through the work of the Center for Service Learning, Center for Public Policy, Center for Community Education, Center for Global Tolerance and Engagement, student clubs and student government. Community-oriented service events include examples such as an annual Water Safety Day designed to educate the community about water safety, Science Day which connects MCC students and science faculty with economically disadvantaged elementary school students, Into the Streets which promotes student and employee volunteerism in needy neighborhoods, and Empty Bowls which raises funds for a local homeless shelter.

MCC's mission specifically states that the college provides transfer education, career preparation, developmental education, economic development, and continuous learning. The fulfillment of the mission components is evidenced through a number of effectiveness indicators documented in the MCC report, Focus on Effectiveness. As stated in the introduction to the report, "... we are committed to carrying out our mission, values and goals and to measuring our performance in relation to them." (*See Resource Room: Focus on Effectiveness.*)

Transfer Education: 62% of students plan to transfer to another college or university. MCC offers four transfer degrees and the Arizona General Education Core which transfers to Arizona universities as a block of 35 credit hours. Results from student outcomes assessment demonstrate significant learning in the general education program, and data from the universities indicate student success after transfer. A Transfer Services Department facilitates the transfer process for students. Data collected from students, employees, and community members provide evidence that all perceive the college is accomplishing its transfer mission. For example, 98% of respondents to the Community Leaders and Partners survey rate MCC as good, very good or excellent at preparing students for transfer, and 86% of respondents to the employee survey agree or strongly agree the college effectively facilitates

student transfer. Furthermore, 96% of students graduating from MCC report they are somewhat or very well prepared to transfer. (*See Resource Room: Assessment Report 2003-2004.*)

Career Preparation: 27% of MCC's students take courses to prepare to enter the job market, improve skills for a present job, or change careers. Students can pursue certificates and degrees in almost 50 career and technical programs and graduates report they feel prepared to enter the workforce. A Career Services Center assists students in their career planning during and after their time at the college. Ninety-eight percent of respondents to a community survey rate MCC as good, very good or excellent at preparing students to enter the workforce and at improving skills for career change or advancement. From the student perspective, 96% of the graduates respond they are somewhat or very well prepared to enter the workplace.

Developmental Education: Over 5,000 students each semester enroll in English, reading, and mathematics courses designed to prepare them to be successful in college-level work. ESL courses provide opportunities for non- or limited-English speaking students to develop English language skills. Seventy-four percent of students who complete developmental courses go on to successfully complete subsequent college-level courses. On the Community Leaders and Partners Survey, 94% of respondents rate MCC as good, very good or excellent at providing opportunities for academically underprepared students.

Economic development: MCC contributes to the economic development of the region through certificate and degree programs that prepare students for the workforce and a variety of other means. The Business & Industry Institute provides customized corporate training for the local business community, and the recently created Mesa Minority and Small Business Center supports new entrepreneurs. Ninety-eight percent of community members responding to the survey rate MCC good, very good, or excellent at contributing to the economic development of the community.

Continuous Learning: The Center for Community Education provides hundreds of non-credit classes to meet the lifelong learning needs of the community, including special programs for target audiences such as seniors and retirees; almost 5,000 residents participate in community education courses each year. Ninety-eight percent of respondents to the Community Leaders and Partners rate MCC as good at providing life-long learning opportunities, and participant evaluations of community education courses are consistently positive. (*See Resource Room: Center for Community Education.*)

Mission and Integrity

Finally, 83% of employees and 96% of community leaders and partners think the college enhances the overall “quality of life” in the local community. These and a wealth of additional findings cited throughout the self-study report provide strong evidence that MCC is accomplishing these five key mission components.

VALUES STATEMENTS

Learning

Mesa Community College values learning and scholarship for our students, our employees, and the community. We value personal growth and provide access to diverse learning experiences in a supportive environment. We seek to continuously learn as an organization and to be responsive to our changing environment.

Excellence

Mesa Community College strives for excellence in all we do. We are committed to upholding high academic standards, to providing a quality educational environment, and to maintaining quality in all aspects of our work. We continuously seek avenues for improvement.

Inclusiveness

Mesa Community College values inclusiveness of people and ideas. We respect the dignity of each individual, expressed through fairness and just treatment for all. We value individual diversity and recognize the unique contributions of all individuals. We promote open communication and the free exchange of thoughts and ideas.

Community

Mesa Community College values a sense of community - both the community we serve and the community we create within. As students, faculty and staff, we have a civic responsibility to our community that is expressed through community involvement and volunteerism. We actively pursue collaborative partnerships with the community. We value our college community and encourage the engagement of all through participation, collaboration, and communication.

- MCC Values Statement

MCC's values are the principles, standards, and ideals that form the foundation for the college's actions, the things to which members of the college community ascribe worth. These values reveal what the college strives for and help define its distinctiveness and identity as a college. Simply stated, MCC values learning, excellence, inclusiveness and community. Embedded within these values are a number of specific ideas that provide a foundation for college initiatives, programs and activities – value for learning and scholarship, for high academic standards, for building community, for continuous improvement, and for the unique contributions of all individuals. Through the self-study process, the college has been able to systematically identify specific programs, services, and projects that exemplify how the college upholds each of the values statements. The results of the self study as presented throughout this report document how the college values are carried out.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Focus on Learning: Strategic Plan 2004-2007 is MCC's most recent strategic plan. It includes 12 strategic goals for the future that provide the college community with the focus necessary to accomplish the college mission and fulfill its values. The strategic plan is also aligned with the vision, mission and strategic directions of the Maricopa County Community College District. The 12 strategic goals are as follows: quality instruction, access, service to students, diversity, technology, communication, civic responsibility, employee professional development, workforce development, financial management and development, physical environment, and institutional effectiveness. Collectively, these goals form the foundation and provide the supporting processes for the college's primary and overarching focus on learning. A more detailed description of the goals and the planning process is found in Chapter 4.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

Student learning goals for general education, career and technical programs, and developmental education are explicitly defined by the college. These goals are consistent with the college mission and represent the knowledge, skills and attitudes valued by the college community for students completing programs of study. The general education goals include written and oral communication, numeracy, critical thinking/problem solving, scientific inquiry, arts and humanities, cultural diversity, and information literacy. Workplace skills include ethics, interpersonal skills, critical thinking, organization, teamwork, technology literacy, and personal and professional responsibility. Discipline-specific learning goals are defined for developmental education. These learning outcome statements are included in all pertinent faculty and student publications. Learning goals at the course level

Mission and Integrity

are defined through a district wide curriculum process. Descriptions of student learning outcomes and details about their assessment and the use of assessment results are found in Chapter 5.

DISSEMINATION

Mesa Community College's mission documents are publicly available, easily accessible, and widely disseminated. Framed posters of the vision, mission and values statements are posted prominently throughout MCC's campuses and other locations. The statements are also available in printed brochures distributed in visitors' packets and at many college events. Mission documents are incorporated into formal college orientations conducted for new students and employees. The mission statements are published in all of the college's key publications including the student handbook, faculty handbooks, college catalog, class schedules, Strategic Plan, and Fast Facts and are posted on the college website.

MCC's vision, mission and values statements are available to prospective and enrolled students via the internet and in printed materials. Students can readily obtain college publications at a number of locations – at both campuses and each of the instructional sites, including the various campus registration sites, advising and student service areas, cashiers office, academic department offices, and the student union. MCC has made a concerted effort to ensure that all its constituencies are made aware of the college's purposes and principles.

Core Component 1b: In its mission documents, Mesa Community College recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society.

All college documents including the vision, mission and values statements and the college strategic plan recognize the centrality of serving diverse populations and the need for educating students for a diverse world. The vision statement emphasizes that the college will be “inclusive” and the mission statement speaks to “preparing individuals for active citizenship in a diverse global society.” One of the four college values is inclusiveness and states the following: *Mesa Community College values inclusiveness of people and ideas.*

We respect the dignity of each individual, expressed through fairness and just treatment for all.

We value individual diversity and recognize the unique contributions of all individuals.

We promote open communication and the free exchange of thoughts and ideas.

The college strategic plan includes the goal of diversity which states that the college will “prepare the learner to succeed in a diverse world.” The underlying assumptions behind this

goal define diversity for the college to mean differences in race, ethnicity, gender, age, lifestyle, disability and class, as well as differences of thoughts and ideas.

MCC fulfills its responsibilities to diverse learners, diverse constituencies and the greater society in a number of ways: hiring practices to ensure that faculty and staff reflect the diversity of society; faculty and staff development activities that focus on diversity; an inclusive curriculum that recognizes the contributions of all cultures; a student learning outcome that addresses awareness, knowledge and attitudes in respect to diversity; student recruitment, retention and development activities that emphasize a climate of respect; community outreach that promotes access, and other campus activities that promote global awareness.

COLLEGE AND DISTRICT PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE DIVERSITY

Diversity is one of the goals of the Maricopa District Governing Board, and there are numerous district-supported initiatives to support this goal. For example, the Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) is comprised of representatives from all the Maricopa colleges who serve as liaisons between the District and the college. The DAC promotes initiatives and makes recommendations that reflect the values of the Governing Board Diversity goal. District wide constituency and interest groups also have a voice in helping shape district diversity initiatives; these include the Asian Pacific Islander Association, Arizona Association Of Chicanos In Higher Education, Gay And Lesbian Human Rights Association, Maricopa Council On Black American Affairs, United Tribal Employees' Council, and Women's Leadership Group. Some of the key strategies in place within the Maricopa District and the college for addressing and promoting diversity throughout the organization are described in this section.

Hiring Practices

The Maricopa District abides by all equal opportunity and affirmative action policies to the fullest extent, and the college maintains a strong commitment to affirmative action in hiring minorities, women, persons with disabilities and veterans. The MCC Affirmative Action Committee reviews and recommends practices and procedures to ensure equal employment opportunities. (*See Resource Room: Affirmative Action Committee Reports.*) When hiring faculty and staff, every search committee at the college is required to include two minorities and also be gender balanced. All faculty job descriptions include a statement requiring that candidates have experience working with diverse populations and curricula.

Mission and Integrity

The Faculty In Progress Program (FIPP) is a district-supported initiative designed to develop a pool of qualified applicants from under-represented groups who can compete for residential faculty positions within the Maricopa District. Interns serve in the program for an academic year during which time they develop a learning contract that serves as a basis for attaining their professional objectives, teach in a department, participate in professional development activities, and interact with faculty mentors at the host college. The goal is for the interns to gain the requisite skills and experience needed to apply for full-time faculty positions within the Maricopa District. Each college hosts one or more interns each academic year. Since the program began in 2001, MCC has hosted six FIPP interns. Additional human resources information is included in Appendix C, Basic Institutional Data Forms. (*See Resource Room: Human Resources.*)

These hiring practices are designed to ensure that the college meets its goal of recruiting a diverse faculty and staff which represents the growing diversity in the community. The present gender and racial/ethnic composition of MCC's employees is shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1

MCC EMPLOYEES BY GENDER AND RACE/ETHNICITY FALL 2004					
	Faculty	Management, Admin, Tech	Professional Staff	Maintenance & Oper/Crafts	Total Employees
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>					
White	78%	77%	67%	59%	74%
Hispanic	10%	12%	21%	35%	16%
Black	6%	11%	7%	4%	7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%	0%	3%	0%	3%
Native American	1%	0%	2%	0%	1%
<i>Gender</i>					
Male	48%	55%	27%	85%	45%
Female	52%	45%	73%	16%	55%

In order to provide context for the race and ethnicity of MCC employees, comparisons with other groups are shown in Table 3-2. This table compares the race and ethnicity of MCC employees, all employees of the Maricopa District, MCC students, and residents of the City of Mesa.

Table 3-2

MCC EMPLOYEES, MARICOPA DISTRICT EMPLOYEES, MCC STUDENTS AND CITY OF MESA RESIDENTS BY RACE/ETHNICITY				
	Fall 2004 MCC Employees	Fall 2004 Maricopa Dist. Employees	Fall 2004 MCC Students	Census 2000 City of Mesa
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>				
White	74%	71%	72%	74%
Hispanic	16%	17%	16%	20%
Black	7%	7%	4%	2%
Asian/Pac. Is.	3%	3%	5%	2%
Native American	1%	2%	3%	1%

*Comparisons exclude unknown, other and multiple categories.

Faculty and Staff Development

Ongoing efforts to enhance employee awareness, knowledge and attitudes regarding diversity are in place to ensure that MCC adheres to its inclusiveness value. For example, the focus of the fall 2002 all-college convocation was a presentation about the changing demographics of the college service area. Another speaker, Dr. Sylvia Hurtado, was recently invited to the college to present her research on diversity and civic engagement. The Center for Teaching and Learning hosts many diversity-related events and seminars. Samples of recent offerings include a dialog about diversifying the curriculum and a workshop on appropriate and meaningful interaction with deaf students.

The Center for Teaching and Learning also regularly conducts workshops (over 165 were offered in 2003-04) on ways to incorporate different and innovative teaching strategies into the classroom to address diverse learning styles. Faculty at MCC employ a variety of teaching strategies to engage students with different ways of learning. Some of these strategies include collaborative learning, technology-enhanced learning, and project-based group assignments. Professional development funds are allocated each year for attendance at cultural diversity conferences and workshops. Professional development is discussed in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

Inclusive Curriculum

A review of the college course schedule and catalog demonstrates the depth and breadth of the MCC curriculum. The 127 course prefixes in the college catalog illustrate the diverse learning experiences offered to students through the curriculum. A large number of courses carry a specific Cultural Diversity in the United States (C) designation, which satisfies one

Mission and Integrity

of two awareness areas required for degrees. The other awareness area may be chosen from courses with Global (G) or Historical (H) designations.

The District Diversity Infusion Program is focused on ensuring diversity in the curriculum and enhancing the ability of faculty to create a positive learning experience that addresses diversity issues and perspectives. Participating faculty receive stipends to develop learning projects that infuse diversity into the courses they teach, and numerous faculty from MCC have participated in the program since its inception in 1998. Projects resulting from the Diversity Infusion Program are shared by faculty through a well-publicized website describing approaches to diversifying the curriculum. The college's diverse and inclusive curriculum is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Student Learning Outcome

Cultural diversity is one of the seven faculty derived general education learning outcomes and addresses student understanding of diverse cultural customs, beliefs and lifestyles; how cultural issues shape perceptions; multicultural interactions; and the contributions of persons from diverse backgrounds. The Student Outcomes Committee has adapted a measure to assess student awareness, attitudes and knowledge regarding diversity. The latest assessment results demonstrate that students completing their general education have significantly higher scores than students beginning their general course of study on a number of the diversity items. These results document positive gains in student learning about diversity as well as changes in student perceptions related to it. Specific findings about the diversity outcome assessment are fully detailed in the annual assessment reports and are also elaborated in Chapter 5 of this report.

Student Recruitment, Retention and Development

The college's commitment to inclusiveness is expressed in its open door policy which allows, within certain academic guidelines, all persons to register for coursework. (*See Resource Room: College Catalog.*) Hence, MCC has a diverse student body including underrepresented and first-generation college students, ethnic minorities, international students, persons of different ages and skill levels, and individuals seeking widely different educational goals.

In addition to coursework, MCC has a number of activities and learning opportunities that address diversity. The college sponsors an array of events to recognize the contributions of many cultures such as World Language Day, Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, and Native American Indian Heritage. A wide selection of clubs, organizations and activities are available to students to facilitate their personal development and to meet the

needs of diverse groups. For example, The Gakuin, the Saturday Japanese School, allows Japanese families to sustain their culture and language and provides the local community learning opportunities in Japanese. Students can become involved in many different cultural or ethnic clubs, honorary groups, student government, athletics, the arts or volunteer programs. (*See Resource Room: Student Handbook.*) The college also offers a wide range of diversity related services through the Multicultural Center, American Indian Center, Veterans Services, Disability Resources and Service Center, International Education Office and the Re-entry Center. These provide support for diverse student populations to ensure their success at the college.

Community Outreach

To reach out to the community, the college engages in a wide variety of activities designed to encourage college participation. Activities such as REACH (Raising Expectations for Achievement and Community Service through Higher Education) and the new ESL Student Services Center promote access to higher education for individuals who might not otherwise attend college. The REACH program is a 2+2+2 model whose goal is to retain and graduate at-risk students in the high schools, community college, and university. MCC has partnered with high schools from the Mesa Public Schools and Tempe Union High School District to provide intensive programs so that at-risk students can graduate at all three levels. The new ESL Student Services Center provides enrollment services and other support services for non-English-speaking students wishing to attend college. Through the Changing Demographics initiative, a group representing the internal and external communities studies demographic trends and makes recommendations to the administration about how to respond through college programs and services.

Globalization

In recent years, world issues and their impact on the college, its students and the community have become increasingly important. Globalization of the curriculum and increasing awareness of global issues among faculty, staff and students have become priorities for the institution. Consequently, the college has supported numerous opportunities for faculty, staff and students to travel internationally and attend international workshops and conferences such as opportunities in The Netherlands, China, Guanajuato and Xalapa, Mexico, Ireland, and Spain. Funding is also available to support globalization of the curriculum. A newly created MCC interdisciplinary academic certificate of Global Citizenship allows students wishing to pursue such a course of study to select from a wide range of courses focusing on global awareness. Finally, MCC's International Education Department plays a key role in recruiting international students, assisting international

Mission and Integrity

students in acclimating to an American college setting, and coordinating college-wide international activities.

Core Component 1c: Understanding of and support for the mission pervade Mesa Community College.

The broad participation in developing MCC's vision, mission and values statements has resulted in college-wide understanding of and support for them. Indeed, the evidence gathered suggests that the present mission documents have become integral to college life.

Survey results show that the vast majority of employees are “familiar with the college vision, mission and values” with 93% of employees agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. (*See Resource Room: Faculty and Non-Faculty Employee Surveys.*) Other survey items related to the mission reveal the following:

- 89% of employees agree or strongly agree that “my department’s plans and goals support the college vision, mission and values.”
- 92% of employees agree or strongly agree that “I understand how my work supports the college vision, mission and values.”

These results are reinforced by qualitative data collected through interviews and discussion groups wherein people articulated in numerous ways how their work contributes to the college mission. Furthermore, students were able to verbalize their understanding of the mission through statements such as, “To serve the community with educational, service, and scholarship opportunities,” and “To prepare students for a globally diverse world.” (*See Resource Room: Interview and Discussion Group Results.*)

The college mission and values are directly linked to the MCC Strategic Plan and are reflected in the planning goals of quality instruction, service to students, diversity, civic responsibility, workforce development, employee professional development, and institutional effectiveness. Furthermore, through the annual departmental planning process, department initiatives are aligned with the strategic goals. And each spring, departments report their major accomplishments and how they are linked with the strategic goals. These accomplishments are documented in the “strategic accomplishments” section of each strategic plan. This interrelated system ensures that college initiatives and priorities are consistent with and support the mission, values, and strategic goals.

Evidence demonstrates that the mission is embedded into the daily life and operations of the

college. Members of the college community can identify numerous ways in which the college fulfills its mission and demonstrates its values. College employees can articulate how their work supports the mission and how their actions and decisions are driven by it. For example, when department directors and managers were asked how their areas support the college mission, all were able to respond with relevant examples. These included promoting college excellence, acting as a community resource, providing access to programs and services, and supporting student and organizational learning. (See *Resource Room: Strategic Conversation Results, Discussion Group Results.*)

Core Component 1d: Mesa Community College's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill the mission.

"Planning helps to keep our faculty, administration, and staff focused on our vision, mission, values, and goals - most importantly the goal of ensuring that our students have the highest quality learning experiences possible."

*- Larry K. Christiansen,
President*

From 2004-2007 Strategic Plan

As a member of the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD), Mesa Community College is governed by the MCCCD Governing Board which provides accountability to the state legislature, governor's office, and the citizens of Maricopa County. The District and the college have organizational structures and processes in place that permit members from all levels within the institution to contribute to governance in ways that move the organization forward to accomplish its mission.

GOVERNING BOARD

The MCCCD Governing Board is made up of five elected members representing geographical districts throughout Maricopa County who serve staggered six-year terms. The Governing Board is the governing body for all colleges and skills centers within the Maricopa District. Governing Board members, their years of service and term expirations are listed on the next page. Years of service through the re-election process demonstrate strong public support for and confidence in the MCCCD Board.

Mission and Integrity

Maricopa County Community College District Governing Board Members

Name	First Year of Service	Current Term Expiration Year
Donald R. Campbell, President	1983	2006
Scott Crowley, Secretary	2004	2008
Linda B. Rosenthal	1979	2008
Ed Contreras	1995	2006
Jerry Walker	2005	2010

The board derives its authority from the Arizona Revised Statutes Section 15-1444 and is subject to the provisions of the Arizona State Constitution. The job of the Board is to represent the residents of Maricopa County in determining and requiring appropriate organizational performance. In 1996, the Governing Board adopted a modified version of John Carver's Policy Governance® model as its framework for accountability to constituencies – this is referred to as the Policy Governance Model. It establishes the principles, policies, and regulations that guide the Board and the Chancellor in management of the District. Under the model, authority for certain policies is transferred by the Board to the Chancellor to manage the day to day operations of the District. These “Administrative Regulations” include policy issues related to students, instruction, fiscal matters, auxiliary services, and equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. According to the Policy Governance Model, the Governing Board evaluates the Chancellor based upon his leadership of the District. The Chancellor sets specific annual goals to be achieved by the college presidents and assesses the achievement of the goals as part of the annual evaluation process. This model provides an appropriate balance between district governance and individual college autonomy. (See Resource Room: MCCCDCD Governance Policies.)

The Governing Board diligently follows all public meeting regulations. The Board meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month to conduct business, listen to citizen comments, hear reports about relevant district and college activities, and take action on items placed on the action agenda for consent or discussion. In addition, the Governing Board holds Strategic Conversations on the second Tuesday of each month. These conversations provide a communication mechanism for the board to interact with members of the internal and external communities about issues of importance to the District. Examples of Strategic Conversation topics during 2004 included Examining Our Culture and Climate, Ethics, Workforce Development, and Shared Governance. (See Resource Room: Governing Board Strategic Conversations.)

Governing Board members are actively involved with the colleges. MCC has two board representatives, Ed Contreras and Jerry Walker, based upon the geographic districts which they represent in Maricopa County. Board members regularly visit the college and are available for meetings with faculty, staff, and students who wish to share information and provide feedback about district and college issues; they also attend many college events such as convocations and graduations.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

After 22 years of leadership service as Chancellor of the Maricopa District, Paul A. Elsner retired in 1999. Following his retirement, there was considerable turnover in the Chancellor position. Raul Cardenas, retired President of Paradise Valley Community College, served as interim Chancellor for one year. Following a national search, Fred Gaskin was hired as Chancellor in 2001; after serving two years he was asked to resign by the Governing Board. In May 2003, Rufus Glasper, then Vice Chancellor for Business Services, was appointed interim Chancellor. Five months later, as the result of an internal search, Dr. Glasper was named Chancellor by the Governing Board.

Throughout the 1980's and 1990's, as the Maricopa District experienced rapid growth, district leadership strongly promoted decentralization, college autonomy, and innovation. With the leadership changes in the past five years, the District moved toward more centralized control, particularly in the area of curriculum. The new Chancellor is mindful of these organizational shifts and of the need to rekindle the spirit of college autonomy and innovation that have been signatures of the District.

Chancellor Glasper has worked diligently during the past year to establish a steady course and clear vision for the future of the Maricopa District. Reporting to the Chancellor are five Vice Chancellors (Academic Affairs, Student Development and Community Affairs, Business Services, Information Technology, and Human Resources) and the presidents of the 10 colleges. These 16 individuals, along with some of the Chancellor's staff, comprise the Chancellor's Executive Council (CEC) which represents the interests of the colleges and provides recommendations in the best interest of the District. A number of district committees and advisory councils report to the CEC, including the following:

- *Financial Advisory Council (FAC)* which makes recommendations about district-wide budgeting processes and matters.
- *Capital Development Advisory Council (CDAC)* which provides oversight of major capital development projects.

Mission and Integrity

- *Diversity Advisory Council (DAC)* which promotes initiatives and makes recommendations that help actualize the Governing Board's goal on diversity.
- *Maricopa Integrated Risk Assessment (MIRA)* which promotes risk awareness within the District.
- *Strategic Planning Advisory Council (SPAC)* which coordinates the district-wide strategic planning process.

These and other district committees and councils play a prominent role in shaping district operations and procedures. Recommendations go to the Chancellor and to the Governing Board if Board action is needed. For example, all changes to the Administrative Regulations are subject to Governing Board approval. MCC administrators, faculty, and staff serve on many of the District committees. Larry Christiansen, President of MCC, serves as co-chair of several district committees and councils.

COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION

The college executive administrative team is comprised of the college President, three deans including a Dean of Instruction, Dean of Student Services, and Dean of Administrative Services, as well as six directors who report to the President. Each member of the administrative team has extensive higher education expertise in their respective areas, and collectively they provide the necessary vision and direction to lead one of the nation's largest community colleges. Brief professional biographies for the President and the three deans are provided below, and complete professional vitas are available in the Resource Room. (*See Resource Room: Administration Vitae.*) Organizational charts showing all reporting relationships between the college and the District and within the college are included in Appendix A.

Dr. Larry K. Christiansen, President. Dr. Larry Christiansen has 36 years of experience in higher education and has served as the President of Mesa Community College since 1988. Prior to his present position, he served as Dean of Administrative Services, Acting Dean of Instruction, and Associate Dean of Instruction at Glendale Community College in the Maricopa Community College District. Other experiences include Associate Professor and Chairman of the Business Division at the University of Minnesota Technical College and Chair of the Business Department at Perry Community High School in Iowa. Dr. Christiansen earned his Associate of Arts degree from North Iowa Area Community College, Bachelor of Arts in business education from the University of Northern Iowa, Master of Science in educational administration from Drake University, and Doctorate in business and vocational education from the University of North Dakota.

Dr. Gail Mee, Dean of Instruction. Dr. Mee has served as Dean of Instruction at Mesa Community College since 1996. Prior to assuming her role as chief academic officer, she was Associate Dean of Instruction for Math and Science at MCC for four years. Before coming to MCC she worked at Orange County Community College in Middletown, New York as a faculty member and department chair in mathematics and computer science and as Director of Research and Planning. Dr. Mee earned her Bachelor of Science in mathematics from Ladycliff College in New York, Master of Science in mathematics from State University of New York, and Doctorate in college teaching and academic leadership from Columbia University.

Dr. John A. Cordova, Dean of Student Services. Dr. Cordova is acting Dean of Student Services at Mesa Community College. Prior to his present position he served as President of South Mountain Community College and Paradise Valley Community College, both colleges within the Maricopa District. Other experiences include Dean of Instructional Services at Phoenix College, Associate Dean of Instruction for Scottsdale Community College and Director of Bilingual Education for the Phoenix Union High School District. He also has teaching experience at the University of New Mexico. Dr. Cordova earned an Associate's Degree from Phoenix College and Bachelor's and Master's degrees and a Ph.D. from Arizona State University.

Mr. Ronald Etter, Dean of Administrative Services. Mr. Etter has served as Dean of Administrative Services at MCC since 1996. Prior to his present position he was Dean of Administrative Services at Phoenix College, also one of the Maricopa Colleges; Business Manager at MCC; and District Cashier, Auditor and Assistant Controller at the Maricopa Community College District Office. Mr. Etter earned his Bachelor of Science in general business and Master of Education in adult and higher education from Arizona State University.

MCC's President serves as the chief officer and the responsible agent for the total operation of the college within the policies and procedures directed by the Governing Board and Chancellor. The President has full authority to administer and manage the college. The President also serves as liaison between the District and the college, participates in determining district policy and operations, and makes recommendations on college issues related to finance, personnel, and policy. President Christiansen participates and provides leadership for a number of district-level committees. He currently serves as co-chair of three groups (the Financial Advisory Council subcommittee on resource allocation, Meet and Confer, and the Strategic Planning Support Team) and is a member of the Faculty

Mission and Integrity

Recruitment Commission, Workforce Education Committee, Biotech Commission, and the Capital Development Advisory Council. The three deans are responsible for setting the strategic direction for each of their areas college-wide and for implementing the policies that fall under their purview. They also have responsibility for specific college-wide agendas.

Dr. Gail Mee, Dean of Instruction (DI), is the chief academic officer of the college. She provides leadership for all credit and non-credit instructional programs and instructional support services at all college locations. She also provides college-wide leadership for strategic and operational planning, assessment of student outcomes, and evaluation of institutional effectiveness. Seven Senior Associate Deans of Instruction report to her, and they are responsible for the following areas: arts, humanities and social sciences; math, sciences, and physical education; career and technical programs; planning and institutional analysis; learning technologies (currently being searched); Extended Campus, and Red Mountain campus. The following five directors report directly to the DI: Center for Teaching and Learning, Center for Community and Continuing Education, International Education, Network Academy, and Service Learning. Additionally, the chairs of the Counseling Department and the Library, three curriculum technicians, and an administrative assistant report to Dr. Mee.

Dr. John Cordova, Acting Dean of Student Services, is responsible for all enrollment, student support, and student development areas of the college. The Director of Athletics and three Senior Associate Deans of Student Services report to Dr. Cordova. Specific college-wide departments report to the Associate Deans, and the Red Mountain Associate Dean oversees student services areas at that campus.

Mr. Ronald Etter, Dean of Administrative Services, is MCC's chief financial officer as well as administrator over several other areas at the college. He provides leadership for technology services, media services, buildings and grounds, bursar, college safety, employee services (personnel), and employee health and safety.

Communication at the executive level is critical in an organization as large as MCC. The President and deans meet weekly to discuss important college issues, both operational and strategic. The President also meets weekly with the Leadership Council which includes all college administrators at the Director and Associate Dean levels, the presidents and presidents-elect of the employee groups (faculty senate; management, administration, and technology; professional staff; maintenance and operations; and crafts), and the chairperson of the chair association (a college association that includes all department chairs but is not a

governance group). The President also meets twice monthly with the employee group leaders to discuss specific issues of interest to the employee groups. Each of the deans holds regular meetings with their respective teams to ensure communication, discuss operational matters, and collectively resolve issues.

SHARED GOVERNANCE, POLICY GROUPS, AND COMMITTEES

A sense of collegiality and shared governance has been the dominant influence in the development of the Maricopa District. The prominent role of the college Faculty Senates and the District Faculty Executive Council, as well as that of the other employee policy groups, provides evidence of the commitment to shared governance. Very recently, shared governance was the topic of the October 2004 Strategic Conversation which was conducted to better define shared governance within the Maricopa District. The conversation was facilitated by four Maricopa faculty members, two of whom were MCC faculty members representing the District Faculty Executive Council. In a presentation made to introduce that conversation, three models of shared governance common to higher education were described – consultative, distributive, and collaborative. Both the District and the college practice aspects of all three types of shared governance at various times. The conversation resulted in some general agreements among the participants who noted that the value of a shared governance model involves mutual respect, responsibility, and accountability. They also concluded that participation by many provides diverse perspectives and improves the decision-making process.

In a large system such as Maricopa, some bureaucratic processes are necessary to enable the efficiency of daily operations, and this can result in a tension between collegial and bureaucratic approaches to decision making. Within Maricopa the overriding goal of shared governance is to ensure that every group within the organization has a voice in decision-making and has some responsibility and autonomy related to matters directly impacting the group. Each employee group is imbued with such responsibilities in their policy manuals. One example, stipulated in the Residential Faculty Policy, states that faculty shall be part of any action that will influence decisions regarding the educational program of the District. One way this stipulation is carried out is through the faculty role in, and responsibility for, the curriculum.

Shared governance is carried out through a variety of means that involve diverse groups of people in various levels of decision-making processes. Within the District and at MCC, this includes the structures and processes provided by the employee policy groups and committees.

Shared governance is carried out through a variety of means that involve diverse groups of people in various levels of decision-making processes.

Mission and Integrity

Students also have a governance role through the student government associations.

Policy Groups

The Maricopa District has six employee policy groups: Faculty Senate, Professional Staff, Management/Administration/Technology, Maintenance and Operations, Crafts, and Safety. These groups all have college and district representation. They collaborate annually with the Governing Board to establish their employment rights, responsibilities, conditions, and salaries as described in their policy group manuals. (*See Resource Room: Employee Group Policy Manuals.*) This is a good faith negotiation process called Collaborative Policy Development (CPD). Each year, each employee group elects a meet-and-confer team to represent the group and through CPD these employee teams negotiate with a team of administrators selected by the Governing Board to represent the Governing Board.

Each policy group also has leadership and shared governance responsibility at the college level. The MCC Faculty Senate, for example, states the following purposes in their constitution:

- to serve as the exclusive negotiating representative of the Faculty to the Mesa Community College Administration, the Maricopa Community College District Administration and Governing Board, the students of Mesa Community College, and other external communities with respect to all academic and professional matters as stated in the Residential Faculty Policies; and
- to select faculty representatives to serve on Administrative Councils and Coordinating Committees of the Colleges and the District; and
- to participate in the formation and implementation of policies affecting education and professional working conditions and/or relationships for Mesa Community College and the Maricopa Community College District; and
- to promote excellence in teaching and learning at Mesa Community College.

Similarly, the other employee groups provide representation on college committees, participate in college decision making, and advocate for their members' rights and responsibilities. The college employee groups represent employees from both campuses; Red Mountain employees can participate in college policy group meetings through video conferencing. An Employee Council was created at the Red Mountain campus that includes representatives from all the groups; this council addresses issues of specific interest to the

campus. As the Red Mountain campus grows, the college will need to ensure that employees have adequate and fair representation in all employee groups.

The student body is represented by their governance group, Associated Students of Mesa Community College (ASMCC). The ASMCC executive board is elected each spring and these officers appoint commissioners; also included on the cabinet are voting representatives from all recognized active student clubs. ASMCC plans numerous student activities, such as student issues forums, and represents the needs and interests of the student body to the college administration. A student representative sits on the President's Leadership Council and on a number of college committees.

Committees

At MCC, committees are charged with providing direction and/or recommendations for a number of important college agendas. As stated in the 2004-2005 Committee Membership Handbook, "The outcomes of committee work provide a foundation for decision making that helps to drive the college's short- and long-term planning directions."

Each spring, faculty, staff, and administrators sign up for committee participation for the following year. There are 24 college committees on which any employee may serve. There are also eight faculty committees which are the charge of the Faculty Senate and report to the Senate President; only faculty may serve on these committees and the Dean of Instruction serves as an ex-officio member. According to the Residential Faculty Policy, the Faculty Senate President has the authority to recommend and/or appoint faculty members to certain committees. (*See Resource Room: Committee Membership Handbook 2004-2005.*)

One example of how the college has used committee roles to move toward a more participatory decision-making model is through the development and evolution of the Operational Planning and Budgeting Committee. Prior to 2000, after annual department plans were submitted, college Deans and Associate Deans worked directly with department chairs and directors to prioritize needs and allocate funds. Resulting budgeting decisions were then shared with members of the Planning and Budgeting committee. This process was not inclusive enough, and there was not an obvious link between the planning and budgeting processes.

To address this concern, an ad hoc committee was appointed to make recommendations to improve participation in the planning and budgeting process. The committee proposed a more participatory process that involves representatives from all employee groups in

Mission and Integrity

reviewing department plans and developing the College Annual Operational Plan. Today, the Operational Planning and Budgeting Committee includes over 25 members representing all administrative areas and employee groups who are actively involved in reviewing all department plans and crafting the college operational plan which is then used as the basis for allocating funds. (*See Resource Room: Operational Planning and Budgeting.*)

The employee survey included items related to roles, responsibilities, and decision making. The results indicate that a large majority of individuals (81%) feel they can make decisions related to their job responsibilities, but fewer (57%) think roles and responsibilities are well defined at the college. MCC is a large and complex organization with a broad mission. The college's enthusiasm for innovation and rapid expansion of programs and services creates an environment of constant change. With the addition of a second campus, new locations, and new programs, ensuring that employees understand organizational roles and responsibilities and that they have an appropriate level of participation in decision-making will be an on-going challenge.

Core Component 1e: Mesa Community College upholds and protects its integrity.

Mesa Community College, as a member of the Maricopa Community College District, is governed by Board Policies established by the Maricopa District Governing Board and by Administrative Regulations established by the Board and administered by the Chancellor of the District. The District governance structure and policy development models are described in detail in the previous section.

The Maricopa Community College District abides by all applicable federal, state, and local regulations. The District, established in 1962 under the laws of the state of Arizona, complies with all federal laws including the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Non-Discrimination on Basis of Sex in Education. The Maricopa District Office of General Counsel provides advice on legal matters to the Governing Board, the Chancellor, the District Office and the colleges. The Office of General Counsel is staffed by a General Counsel, two Assistant General Counsels, and seven staff members including an EEO/AA Manager, and a Risk Manager. All of the services provided by the office as well as extensive information about legal matters affecting the District and the colleges are described on the department website.

The core values of Mesa Community College – learning, excellence, inclusiveness and community – reflect the honesty and integrity of the institution. The good relationships the

college enjoys with employees, students, and the community are built on these values and on the college's commitment to act in concert with them. Policies and practices of the college are ethical, available to the public, and consistent with the mission.

NON-DISCRIMINATION / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The District's endorsement of Equal Employment Opportunity principals encompasses both the letter and spirit of the laws that prohibit discrimination in employment. As a public educational institution, the Maricopa Community College District complies with all non-discrimination and Affirmative Action laws and regulations. There is a strong commitment to affirmative action in hiring minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and veterans. District Administrative Regulations are in place defining non-discrimination policies including those related to sexual harassment, equal employment opportunity, disabilities complaints, and confidentiality.

In addition to adhering to all District regulations, MCC has a college-wide Affirmative Action committee that is charged with reviewing and recommending practices and procedures to ensure equal educational and employment opportunities. The committee advises the President regarding affirmative action and cultural and ethnic diversity at the college. *(See Resource Room: Affirmative Action Committee.)*

FISCAL INTEGRITY AND OVERSIGHT

Although the ten Maricopa Colleges are independently accredited, the Maricopa County Community College District is the legal entity as designated by state statute and all funding flows through it to the colleges. For example, the District levies county taxes and collects state aid. The Maricopa District's responsibilities for stewardship, safeguarding of assets, and fiscal accountability are defined by Administrative Regulations on Financial Condition and Asset Protection. *(See Resource Room: MCCCCD Governance Policies.)* These regulations regarding fiscal management ensure integrity in the fiscal affairs of the District and include policies and procedures related to operations such as purchasing, sale of products or services, travel and official functions. Each fiscal year an audit of the financial position of the District is conducted by the Auditor General's Office, using Government Auditing Standards, in order to verify financial statements. Results are published in the MCCCCD Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). All audits have resulted in auditor opinions that district financial statements are "fairly stated."

Each fiscal year an audit of the financial position of the District is conducted by the Auditor General's Office, using Government Auditing Standards, in order to verify financial statements.

Mission and Integrity

In May 2004, the Maricopa District and the Higher Learning Commission signed an updated Memorandum of Understanding which stipulates that the District will provide financial evidence for accreditation of its colleges including the CAFR, adopted budgets, budget-to-actual expenditure analysis by college, and the multi-year financial plan. These financial documents were submitted by Maricopa's Vice Chancellor for Business Services to the Executive Director of the HLC on November 1, 2004. The Memorandum of Understanding is included in Appendix F. (*See Resource Room: MCCCCD Budget Documents.*)

In 1994, the Governing Board passed a resolution on financial stability that stipulated the District end each fiscal year with eight percent or more carry-forward dollars in the operational budget. This goal has been reached every year since its inception. Every year since 1991, the District has been awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for the highest standards in government accounting and financial reporting.

Two district councils play important roles in financial matters: the Capital Development Advisory Council (CDAC) and the Financial Advisory Council (FAC). Although the college has budgetary authority to expend funds for major capital projects, approval for such expenditures must be secured from the CDAC which has representation from the Governing Board, the college presidents, and the District facility planning department. CDAC reviews all plans for expenditures over \$50,000 for construction and infrastructure projects and ensures that the colleges have the operational dollars necessary to support the opening of new buildings. The FAC is made up of 23 members from all employee groups as well as college presidents. FAC is responsible for the supervision and coordination of district-wide budgeting processes. It makes recommendations to the Chancellor's Executive Council regarding all budget-related matters including projection of future years' revenues and tuition increases.

At the college level, fiscal matters and personnel are the responsibility of the Dean of Administrative Services who ensures good accounting practices, appropriate business controls, and adherence to all administrative guidelines and state and federal regulations. MCC has a number of mechanisms in place for budget oversight. For example, Fund 1 Operational Budget Status Reports that include actual, encumbered, and projected figures are prepared for the President and the Leadership Council on a weekly basis. These reports allow college leadership to monitor the operational budget on a weekly basis and to make spending adjustments based upon projections. Inventories of all college assets are done periodically to verify that the college is maintaining stewardship of public funds in terms of

physical assets. The college fiscal office staff monitor all expenditures for appropriateness and accuracy. The college can call upon the services of an internal auditing group from the District Office; this group assists college staff by reviewing fiscal practices and records and recommending improvements. They also conduct unannounced audits of college fiscal operations. Additionally, the Cashier's Office has procedures in place to distribute and reconcile petty cash and employee reimbursements and receive student payments.

DEALINGS WITH INTERNAL CONSTITUENCIES

The Maricopa District and the college take seriously the protection of the rights of individuals – both employees and students – and this is evidenced through the numerous policies and procedures which are in place and publicly documented. Policy manuals for all employee groups including Residential Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, Professional Staff, Maintenance and Operations, Crafts, Management, Administrative, and Technological employees, College Safety, Chancellor's Executive Council, and Specially Funded employees are published by the Maricopa District. These manuals establish the rights, responsibilities, employment conditions, compensation, and hiring practice for each of the employee groups. Employee grievances are covered by grievance policies and procedures published in policy manuals. These procedures emphasize resolution before entering the formal grievance process. (See *Resource Room: Employee Policy Manuals*.)

Each year the District publishes *The Blue Book: An Essential Guide for Maricopans* which addresses standards and policies applicable to all employees. Standards and policies include professional conduct, rules and regulations, and terms and conditions of employment that are compliant with state and federal statutes and consistent across all employee policy manuals. (See *Resource Room: The Blue Book*.) In addition to district policy manuals, Mesa Community College publishes a Residential Faculty Handbook and an Adjunct Faculty Handbook which address academic policies and practices and describe college services that support teaching and learning. (See *Resource Room: Residential Faculty Handbook and Adjunct Faculty Handbook*.)

Student policies and practices are applied fairly and consistently across all locations and campuses. This is accomplished through a concerted effort to document, communicate and adhere to a common set of practices. All policies related to student rights are thoroughly documented in the College Catalog and the Student Handbook. In all areas of the college confidentiality of student information is a priority. The college adheres to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines concerning the release of individual information and to the tenets of the Student Right to Know Act. Training is provided for all

Mission and Integrity

employees who access student information. One example of how the college monitors student rights is through the Admissions and Standards Committee which reviews admission policies and procedures and academic standards, recommends revisions to policies and procedures, and reviews student appeals of administrative decisions or requests for exceptions. Quality processes are in place to monitor compliance with regulations and to ensure protection of student rights. *(See Resource Room: Admissions and Records.)*

Ensuring the health and safety of employees in the workplace and of students attending the college is a major priority of the District. The establishment and implementation of appropriate health and safety practices rests with the individual colleges. MCC follows the codes and regulations specified by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and a district OSHA Compliance Team supports college activities in this area. Through the District's Public Access Defibrillation Program, MCC has acquired automated external defibrillators located throughout both campuses and at several Extended Campus locations; regular employee training on the proper use of the defibrillators is provided. The college is required to have a plan as well as employee training on a number of other important health and safety matters, including the following: workplace violence, emergency evacuation, defensive driving, and general safety and emergency procedures. *(See Resource Room: MCC Safety and Emergency Procedures.)*

The College Safety Department provides a number of services to students including the protection of college and personal property, traffic control, lost and found services, the identification of safety hazards, and crime prevention. Well documented policies and procedures are communicated to the college community through a website and student publications. Emergency call boxes are placed throughout both campuses. In addition to notifying the college community of crimes, the department offers an escort service, assistance for disabled motor vehicles, crime prevention activities and bulletins and safety presentations. The office is in operation 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Additional information about college safety can be found in the Federal Compliance chapter of this report.

DEALINGS WITH EXTERNAL CONSTITUENCIES

To maintain the integrity of relationships with external constituents, MCC follows all appropriate Maricopa District Administrative Regulations which outline business and operating procedures. The college has numerous partnerships and contractual arrangements with external entities, including lease agreements, construction contracts, consulting services, agreements with clinical sites, grants, and partnerships with the public and private sector. All contractual agreements require review by the Office of General Counsel and

approval by the Governing Board; compliance is monitored by a contract manager. Grant proposals are carefully reviewed by the District Grants Office; grant awards are approved by the Governing Board and monitored by the District. (*See Resource Room: Contractual Agreements.*)

CO-CURRICULAR AND AUXILIARY SERVICES

The college's integrity with regard to co-curricular and auxiliary services is ensured by following all relevant Board policies and procedures. Several services are outsourced to private entities, including the bookstore, food service, and copy and mail services. Contracts for these services are awarded through a competitive bid process conducted by the District, and awards are made for a five-year period. In most cases, the provider serves all the colleges in the District; the company awarded the contract provides inventory, management, and employees. Current outsourced services at MCC are college bookstores which are operated by Follett, food services which are provided by Aramark and Jazzland Coffee, and copy and mail services which are provided by IKON.

MCC has a large intercollegiate athletics program that is regulated by the Arizona Community College Athletic Conference (ACCAC) and the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). The ACCAC constitution contains procedures and regulations that maintain standards of academic performance, ideals of sportsmanship, fair and equal competition, and codes of conduct. All coaches are kept up to date on athletic regulations and are expected to comply with them; this includes tracking many statistics about teams as well as individual athletes. An Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act report is filed by the college annually with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education. Athletic data such as graduation rates by sport are reported each year in the IPEDS report. Additional athletic statistics are included in Appendix C, Basic Institutional Data forms. (*See Resource Room: Athletics.*)

As evidence of integrity in athletics, the college was recognized in October 2004 for having one of the top three community college athletic programs in the country. This is an inaugural award instituted by Pepsi-Cola North America and the National Alliance of Two-Year College Athletic Administrators. The award is based upon scoring of the top five men's and women's sports at the college and recognizes overall athletic program excellence.

PUBLICATIONS

Mesa Community College represents itself accurately and honestly to the public through

Mission and Integrity

numerous college publications. The College Catalog, Viewbook, Fast Facts, schedules and program brochures all accurately describe the college and its programs and services. MCC's affiliation with the Higher Learning Commission is published in all key publications. Other publications, such as the Strategic Plan, Commission on Excellence in Education Annual Report, and the Bulletin, are also used to represent the college to internal and external constituencies and are fair and accurate portrayals of college practices, policies, programs, and services.

SUMMARY

Mesa Community College has, through a systematic and incremental process, developed mission documents that accurately reflect its institutional priorities. The college has stayed true to its mission as evidenced by the degree to which students, staff, college leadership and community members perceive the mission to be appropriate for the college. The mission documents reflect the needs of diverse constituencies, promote academic excellence, show an appreciation for diversity, and recognize the broader community served by the college.

Support and understanding of the mission is widely held. Further, planning and budgeting processes reinforce the accomplishment of the common elements of the mission, vision and learning objectives. Integration of key components of the mission in departmental planning provides evidence of the centrality of the college mission to the every day life of the college.

A well established structure of governance and administration supports the development, communication, and realization of the college mission. At both the District and college level there is congruence among all the mission elements. Shared governance processes demonstrate communication and employee and student involvement. There is centrality of purpose in protecting and fostering the academic process at all levels of governance.

Finally, the integrity of the institution is protected by processes and policies that protect the rights of individual constituencies. The documentation, communication and implementation of standard policies in many areas build confidence in the organization. Processes are in place that promote fiscal responsibility and ensure that the college meets legal and ethical standards.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

By articulating its shared values, Mesa Community College has created a foundation for framing discussions about issues of importance to the college. At the same time, because

they affirm strong ideals and identify the college's distinctiveness, these values have helped create a strong sense of community both within and outside the college.

MCC's attention to the critical role of diversity and inclusiveness is a strength. The inclusiveness of diverse people and ideas is one of the stated college values, diversity is the focus of one of the college strategic goals, and numerous programs and services are designed to fulfill the diversity goal. These attest to MCC's understanding that, as local, national, and international context changes, so must the college as it serves as a key access point to higher education for so many individuals.

Sound financial planning and fiscal responsibility at both the college and district levels have provided the college a stable foundation on which to build programs and plan for the many changes in the future. Furthermore, the college's stewardship for public dollars is recognized by the community served.

Mesa Community College faces challenges that must be conscientiously planned for in the future. The college's growing enrollment is anticipated to continue; this means that there are more students to be served, more locations to be operated and maintained, and more people to be involved. It is incumbent upon the college to ensure that key stakeholders have a voice in decision making and that the ideal of shared governance is upheld.

A related challenge is balancing the tension between the college's spirit of innovation and the realities of being part of a large district bureaucracy. It will be increasingly important to be vigilant to ensure that processes and procedures do not overwhelm the innovative spirit of the individuals who make Mesa Community College a vibrant institution of higher learning.

Chapter 4

Preparing for the Future

- College Planning Process
- Institutional Resources
- Continuous Improvement through Evaluation and Assessment
- Fulfilling the College Mission



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Preparing for the Future

- College Planning Process
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Criterion 2: Mesa Community College's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

MCC's Strategic Goals

Quality Instruction: Enhance student learning and development through innovative teaching strategies and high quality instructional programs.

Access: Expand access to college programs and services.

Service to Students: Enhance support services for students to increase their success, foster learning, and enhance their development.

Diversity: Prepare the learner to succeed in a diverse world.

Technology: Use technology to ensure access to current knowledge, foster human connections, and enhance learning.

Communication: Encourage open communication among all members of the college community.

Civic Responsibility: Encourage active participation of faculty, staff, and students in democratic processes, public policy, and community service.

Employee Professional Development: Expand opportunities for the professional development of all employees.

Workforce Development: Establish Mesa Community College as a major training, education, and development provider.

Financial Management and Development: Implement more effective financial management strategies and increase resource development activities.

Physical Environment: Provide a safe, secure, and aesthetically pleasing environment for working, teaching, and learning.

Institutional Effectiveness: Enhance college effectiveness through continuously assessing and evaluating programs, services, and processes.

Preparing for the Future

INTRODUCTION

Early in MCC's history, planning tended to be episodic and often was prompted by some external event such as a bond election. But with the dramatic changes in transitioning to a new millennium, the emergence of the information age and a knowledge-based economy, and a shifting political and social environment, MCC has adopted planning as an effective means of positioning for the future.

One of the challenges from the 1995 HLC visiting team stated that the college lacked a consistent planning process. This challenge has not only been addressed, it has been embraced. By developing a consistent planning process, MCC has been able to plan more effectively for rapid growth, the addition of a second comprehensive campus, funding issues, and other competing obligations. Planning is viewed by the college community as an opportunity to more effectively set institutional priorities, allocate resources, and prepare for the future. The response has been comprehensive, systemic, and grounded in MCC's commitment to student and organizational learning. As stated in the college strategic plan *Focus on Learning: Strategic Plan 2004-2007*, "Learning is the heart of our mission and is central to all we do as a college... It is incumbent upon us to ensure the primacy of learning in planning directions and setting priorities for the future."

Subsequent to the 1995 HLC team visit, the college embarked in earnest upon the development and implementation of a multi-level and interrelated planning process. This process began in the instructional area with academic departments generating annual departmental plans and a college committee undertaking a comprehensive strategic planning process that resulted in the *MCC Strategic Plan 1998-2001*. The strategic plan has been reviewed and revised each year since 1998. In 2001, a formalized college operational planning process was put into place, bringing together individual department plans into operational plans for each administrative area and the college as a whole.

In academic year 1999-2000, the Maricopa District began to develop a concept for a top-down and bottom-up planning system that would enable the 10 independently accredited colleges to pursue their own planning initiatives while at the same time supporting Governing Board goals and advancing the six strategic directions of the District. (*See Resource Room: Maricopa Community Colleges Strategic Planning Handbook.*) College representatives were involved in developing the District directions and process, and systems were developed for the colleges to align with it. Since MCC was already several years into its own planning initiatives, aligning with the District was a straightforward process. Since 2000, the MCC

Strategic Plan has included a section illustrating the congruence between college and district goals, as shown below in Table 4-1. This chapter describes, and presents evidence to support, how MCC fulfills the expectations set forth by the Higher Learning Commission for Criterion 2 and its Core Components.

Table 4-1

ALIGNMENT OF MCCCCD STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND MCC STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS	
MARICOPA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS
1 Maximize stakeholder access to Maricopa Colleges' facilities, programs and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access • Service to Students
2 Promote and support expansion of dynamic learning environment and delivery options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Instruction • Technology • Physical Environment
3 Maximize collaboration among Maricopa Colleges and with external partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Development • Civic Responsibility
4 Significantly enhance both new and existing revenue sources to promote growth and increase cost effectiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Management and Development
5 Recruit and retain a quality and diverse workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Instruction • Diversity • Employee Professional Development
6 Develop a strong identity that reflects its educational leadership role in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Civic Responsibility

Core Component 2a: Mesa Community College realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

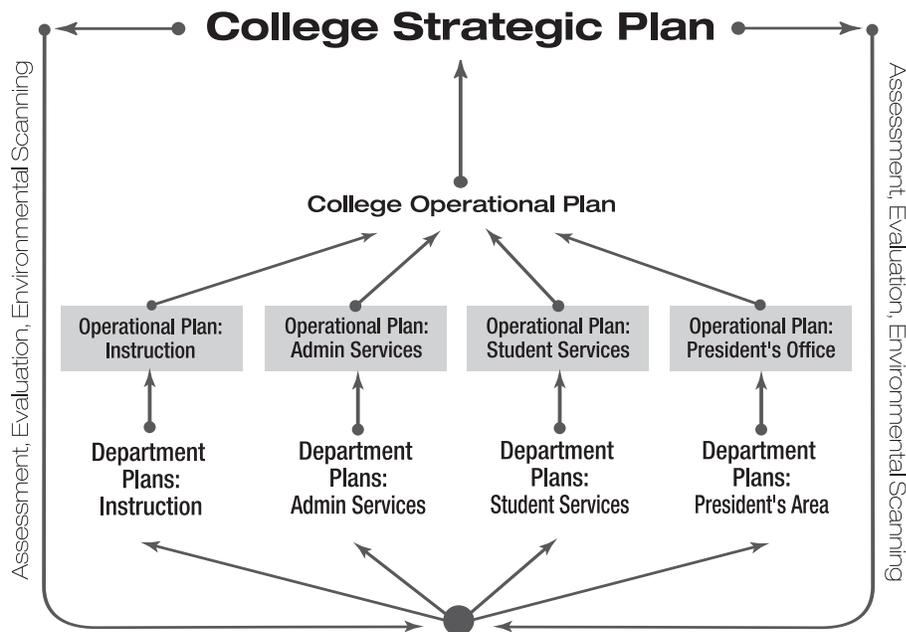
MCC prepares for the future through a comprehensive and systemic strategic, operational, and departmental planning process which occurs on an annual cycle. Planning begins with a regular examination of both internal and external issues, trends and events which is accomplished through environmental scanning. Environmental scanning allows the college as a whole, as well as individual departments, to consider what social, economic, technological and other environmental changes are likely to have an impact. In addition to regular ongoing environmental scanning, two formal environmental scans have been

Preparing for the Future

conducted by external consultants in the past five years. (See *Resource Room: Environmental Scanning*.)

MCC's planning process includes three major levels of planning: departmental planning, college operational planning, and strategic planning. Each level informs the others and all are continuously reviewed and aligned. Plans are informed by student outcomes assessment and evaluation of institutional effectiveness; in turn, plans inform budget decisions. The MCC planning process is illustrated in Figure 4-1:

Figure 4-1



DEPARTMENT PLANNING

Each fall, every department in the college engages in an annual planning process and develops a three-year plan consisting of the following:

- Statement of major departmental initiatives for each of the following three years
- Alignment of each initiative with the college strategic goals and objectives
- Statement of the resources needed to accomplish the initiatives, including staff, operational costs, and capital.

As part of this process, chairs and managers involve their faculty and staff in addressing a

series of questions such as: What changes are occurring external to the college that might have an impact on the future of the department? What can or should the department do to prepare for these changes? An example of an external change affecting a department might be a dramatic increase in the need for technicians trained in information assurance; a corresponding response would be to conduct a formal needs assessment and, if that need is substantiated, develop a new program.

The Office of Research and Planning staff supports and facilitates all levels of the planning process. Training sessions are held each fall for chairs and managers during which the process is reviewed and updated. Deans provide administrative leadership for department chairs and managers as they develop plans each fall. When the planning process was first initiated in the mid-1990's, only instructional departments wrote formal three-year plans. By academic year 2001-2002, all departments within administrative services, student services, and the president's office had received training and began preparing plans. All areas of the entire college now formally participate in the departmental planning process. Development of an online planning form in 2001 helped to streamline the production of the plans and the various review and revision cycles. Department plans are submitted online to the appropriate deans each October. (*See Resource Room: Department Plans.*)

Considerable evidence indicates that planning has become a regular and expected part of how the college conducts business and is exemplified in excerpts from employee surveys and department and manager interviews. (*See Resource Room: Department Chair and Manager Interviews.*) When asked, "What impact has the departmental planning process had on your department?" the vast majority of the almost 50 individuals interviewed had positive responses. The major themes of these responses were threefold: planning focuses the departments on the future and common goals of the college, planning provides a forum for all members of the college community to participate in looking to the future, and planning allows all departments to be on equal footing in terms of setting forth their initiatives and the resource needs related to them. Three interview comments from department chairs represent many others:

Considerable evidence indicates that planning has become a regular and expected part of how the college conducts business.

- "Planning has had a major impact. Everything we do and how we evaluate is based upon the plan... and goes back to our mission and our priorities."
- "Planning has pulled the department together. I have had tremendous buy-in putting the plan together, meeting with all the various groups within the department... It lets us see direction for the department."

Preparing for the Future

- “The planning process assists us in visualizing what is possible for our department. The process has significant value in helping us to set prioritized goals and then set out a logical blueprint for completing those goals.”

Survey results corroborate these interview responses and indicate a high level of participation in the departmental planning process: 91% of residential faculty and 66% of non-faculty employees agreed or strongly agreed that they had been “appropriately involved in my departmental planning activities.” (*See Resource Room: Faculty and Non-Faculty Employee Survey Results.*)

COLLEGE OPERATIONAL PLANNING

Once all departmental plans have been submitted to appropriate deans, they move into the next phase of college operational planning. The Operational Planning and Budgeting Committee, which includes representatives from all employee groups and administrative areas, receives copies of all department plans. Four sub-teams are formed within the committee (instruction, student services, administrative services, and the president’s office). The sub-teams review all plans for each of the four administrative areas and synthesize them into an overall operational plan that represents a consensus of initiatives for each area. These four operational plans are then synthesized again into the final operational plan for the college which reflects the major college-wide operational initiatives and how they are aligned with the college strategic goals and objectives. This operational plan drives budget allocations for the following year. (*See Resource Room: College Operational Plans.*)

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Department and operational planning are both driven by and inform the college Strategic Plan. MCC’s current strategic planning process began in the mid-1990’s and has been an ongoing annual process which includes a three-year planning horizon. The first in a series, the *MCC 1998-2001 Strategic Plan* was developed through an iterative two-year process that involved a Strategic Planning Committee working in collaboration with the Continuous Improvement Committee. These jointly planned a series of strategic conversations that engaged employees from all areas of the college in discussions about the various strategic goals and objectives under consideration. (*See Resource Room: Strategic Plans.*)

Today, the Strategic Planning Committee is a large standing college committee that includes representation from all employee groups, administrative areas, and college locations. Each year, the Strategic Planning Committee reviews the existing strategic plan in light of a

comprehensive environmental scanning analysis. External trends, events and issues that are likely to impact the college are identified and synthesized. Internal scanning includes review of the operational plans developed as a result of the departmental planning process, and review of student outcomes and institutional effectiveness indicators; new initiatives are integrated into the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. Finally, each spring departments submit their major accomplishments for the year, again aligned with the college strategic goals. These are also reviewed in light of what modifications might be needed to the current plan based upon the accomplishments. Thus, both internal and external factors are analyzed and incorporated into the annual review and update cycle for the strategic plan.

A significant outcome of the planning process is the decision making for capital expenditures and staffing. For example, academic departments write program development and/or expansion initiatives in their plans as well as related staffing and equipment needs to support those initiatives. Staffing requests then go to the Faculty Staffing Committee which reviews them and makes recommendations to the President for future hiring cycles. Capital requests are similarly reviewed and prioritized based upon their inclusion in the department and operational plans. Each year, final capital allocations are summarized and aligned back to the college strategic goals and objectives. *(See Resource Room: Capital Allocation Summaries.)*

Employee survey data help demonstrate the extent to which planning has been integrated into the college culture and mission. Eighty-nine percent of employees responding to the survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “My department’s plans and goals support the college vision, mission and values.” Over two-thirds (68%) of employees responding agreed or strongly agreed that “through its planning process, the college effectively prepares for the future.”

One example of a complete new program development cycle helps illustrate how MCC both anticipated and responded to an economic trend through its planning and budgeting cycle. The example is the establishment of the Biotechnology Program. In 1998, the Life Science Department wrote an initiative in its department plan to conduct a feasibility study for a Biotechnology Program. The initiative supported the college strategic goal for quality instruction and the objective to “explore potential and develop new programs and curricula that meet the expectations of ...the workforce.” The department conducted employer surveys, collected workforce and economic development data about the industry, and visited other colleges with biotechnology programs.

One example of a complete new program development cycle helps illustrate how MCC both anticipated and responded to an economic trend through its planning and budgeting cycle.

As a result of the feasibility study, the department recommended moving forward with program development and requested a new faculty member with specialization in biotechnology. This recommendation was then incorporated into the operational instructional plan. In 1999, a “one-year-only” faculty member was hired to take the lead with curriculum and program development, and a considerable amount of capital equipment was funded to support the program. Subsequent funding requests and allocations from both the college and the Maricopa District supported additional development costs. By 2003, biotechnology had become one of the major economic drivers in the Phoenix metropolitan area. MCC’s Biotechnology Program was well established, the only such program in the state of Arizona, and staffed by three full-time residential faculty members. This example is typical of the planning, budgeting, and implementation cycle continuously undertaken by the college as it responds to rapidly changing social and economic trends.

MASTER PLANNING AND BOND PLANNING

Concurrent with other types of planning at the college is facility master planning and bond planning. Master planning is an ongoing and critical part of the planning process that enables the college to stay current with population growth, develop new facilities (e.g., the new Red Mountain campus), upgrade aging facilities, and make needed large technology investments. Facilities master planning is driven by academic programming, service priorities, and student life. The most recent master plan was developed over a two-year period by an architectural firm which gathered input from faculty, administrators, and staff through a series of intensive planning sessions. The master plan addresses conceptual space, facility, and usage issues for both Southern and Dobson and Red Mountain campuses. It is based upon projections for student enrollment as well as population growth and economic factors in the surrounding communities. (*See Resource Room: MCC Master Plan 2002-2022.*) The master plan provides the conceptual base for developing priorities as well as the more detailed specifications needed with the passage of the 2004 bond referendum.

In summary, there is a wealth of evidence that MCC realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal, technological and economic trends. Institutional research data show that growth at the college has been increasing by more than 500 students per year for the past 10 years. As the student population increases and becomes more diverse, MCC has responded in a number of significant ways: by planning for and building a second comprehensive campus, developing additional course locations in its service area to improve access, increasing services for the growing Hispanic community, increasing the number of student scholarships, providing increased access through a wide array of online courses, and supporting the needs of a changing business and industry environment. Each of these

accomplishments, and numerous others, has been achieved in fulfillment of the college strategic plan. They reflect the results of a collective college-wide effort and a highly participatory process. Over the past decade, planning for the future has become a way of life at Mesa Community College. Organizational systems have been put into place, appropriate administrative structures and support staff facilitate the planning process, and there is a common understanding overall that planning has been good for the college. Planning processes will help the college keep pace with the growing population, stay abreast of social and technological changes, ensure that programs are current and relevant for students living in a new knowledge economy, and establish priorities within existing resources.

Core Component 2b: Mesa Community College's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Mesa Community College's resources clearly support educational programs and are adequate to maintain and strengthen these in the future. This is evidenced by its allocation of funding for the purchase, upgrade and utilization of technology; building of new facilities and maintenance/renovation of existing facilities and infrastructure; appropriate college-wide staffing; continuous program development; and support for professional development for all employees. MCC has an interlocking planning process which determines how resources will be distributed in order to support educational programs and create a climate of creative and intellectual synergism consistent with the college mission.

COLLEGE BUDGET

Mesa Community College and the Maricopa County Community College District are fortunate to have a stable and solvent financial resource base that is projected to continue into the future. This is the result of a long history of strong financial planning, such as that represented in the Maricopa Community College Financial Plans which project numerous financial scenarios several years into the future. (*See Resource Room: Budget-MCCCD Financial Plans.*) Revenues flow through the Maricopa District to the 10 member colleges. As stated in the Adopted Budget: Fiscal Year 2003-2004 document (*See Resource Room: Budget-MCCCD Adopted Budgets.*), "The first parameter for budget development is maintenance of the District's financial stability policy, which requires balances of at least 8% of General Fund revenues. The District has met this requirement each year since the policy was adopted and this budget reflects resources sufficient to meet the policy goal by year end."

The District's funding structure has enabled it and the colleges to prosper despite considerable reductions in state funding along with large increases in the state retirement

Preparing for the Future

rate, property and liability insurance, and medical insurance costs over the past decade. The total District budget for FY2003-2004 was \$725 million with a General Fund (Fund 1) of \$415 million; MCC's total budget was \$100,610,176 with a General Fund of over \$65 million. The budget includes four major funds categories:

- Fund 1 is the General Fund and the main operating budget fund for the colleges. Revenues are unrestricted in use and are used to cover most of the basic operating costs including salaries, benefits, utilities and supplies.
- Fund 2 is the Auxiliary Fund which includes self-supporting enterprises such as non-credit course offerings, bookstore, athletics and some specified scholarships.
- Fund 3 is the Restricted Fund including Student Financial Aid and Grants.
- Fund 7 is the Plant Fund which accounts for capital expenditures for new construction, building upgrades and renovation, and capital equipment.

REVENUE BUDGET

Property taxes provide the primary revenue source, accounting for a large percentage of the total budget. As one of the nation's fastest growing counties, Maricopa County has experienced steadily increasing assessed valuations. In addition, in order to keep pace with the rapid growth, the District Governing Board has found it necessary to increase student tuition in eight of the past ten years, to the 2004-05 level of \$55 per credit hour. Tuition is still below the national average for 2-year public institutions and was rated a very good or excellent value by 79% of respondents to an MCC community leaders' survey. General Fund revenue sources are as follows: 58% property tax, 24% tuition and fees, 11% state aid, 5% fund balances, and 2% miscellaneous.

The District Financial Advisory Council (FAC) recommended several years ago that the colleges receive enrollment growth funding when their full-time student equivalent (FTSE) enrollments exceeded the previous fiscal year's enrollment numbers. These enrollment growth funds are received in the current fiscal year in which they are earned and constitute a permanent increase to the college's base budget. The FTSE enrollments are audited at the end of the fiscal year so an exact count is provided. The rate in FY2003-2004 was \$1,800 for every FTSE exceeding the last year's final audited numbers.

Budget numbers reported in this section represent the total college budget for FY2003-2004, the most current audited budget year. In fiscal year 2003-04, MCC's FTSE growth

was 706, resulting in a budget increase of \$1,270,800 for growth. The amount increased to \$1,950 per FTSE in FY2004-2005. Additional budget growth is realized through the allocation of new faculty positions, salary increases and related employee benefits. Table 4-2 below illustrates selected comparative financial data illustrating some of the significant changes at the college in the past decade.

Table 4-2

MCC FISCAL COMPARISONS FISCAL YEAR 1993-1994 AND FISCAL YEAR 2003-2004		
	FY1993-1994	FY2003-2004
General Fund Budget	\$32,395,312	\$65,190,378
Total College Budget	\$48,446,730	\$100,610,176
State Aid	16% of General Fund budget	12% of General Fund budget
Annual Audited Headcount	32,842	43,931
Annual Audited FTSE	10,666	15,126

It is important to note that an analysis of district annual budget reports shows that MCC generates 26% of the total FTSE in the District but receives only 18% of the operating budget. The District philosophy is that the larger colleges help support the smaller colleges in the District and also provide significant financial support for District Office operations. With the decreasing amount of state aid, this funding structure is beginning to strain the MCC budget. For example, the college is allowed to carry forward a maximum of 3% of the adopted Fund 1 budget and use these funds in the subsequent year. But the amount that MCC has been able to carry forward in the last three budget cycles has been considerably below the maximum 3% carry forward allowance.

EXPENDITURE BUDGET

In academic year 2003-2004, 57% of MCC's General Fund budget was allocated for instruction and 13% for academic support. The remaining 30% of the expenditure budget was allocated as follows: 8% for student services, 8% for physical plant, 7% for general institutional expenses, and 7% for administrative costs. When analyzed by object code, 73% of the total expenditure budget is allocated to employee salaries and 15% to benefits. Expenditure budgets are shown in Figures 4-2 and 4-3. These data provide evidence of the college's commitment to teaching and learning as well as to people as its most valuable resource.

Figure 4-2

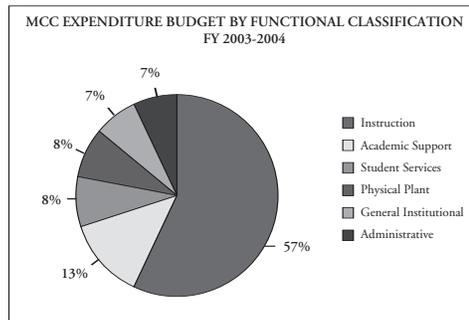
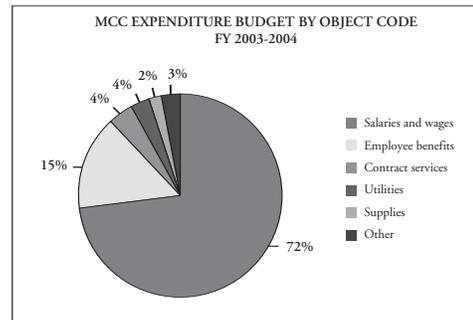


Figure 4-3



Funding decisions are tied to the college planning process. One example of this is faculty staffing. Each year, a Faculty Staffing Committee reviews staffing requests from department chairs and these requests are directly linked to their department plans. For example, chairs request new positions to support development of new programs or expansion of existing programs. The Staffing Committee makes recommendations to the President about faculty hiring priorities for the following year, and these recommendations are considered in making final staffing decisions. Similarly, all capital requests must be prioritized and linked to initiatives in departmental plans in order to be funded. With limited capital funds, the plans assist administration in setting priorities for capital allocations.

BOND REFERENDUM

A \$386 million bond referendum passed by Maricopa County voters in 1994 allowed for a new capital development program that extended over a decade. Districtwide, this bond resulted in a 43% expansion of classroom and support space, renovation of aging facilities, and the purchase of computers and other technology infrastructure. At MCC, two new buildings (the library and life science buildings) were constructed on the Southern and Dobson campus, considerable renovations were completed, technology was significantly upgraded, security was upgraded, and Phase I of the new Red Mountain campus was built.

Anticipating the spend-out of the 1994 bond as well as the continuing projections for rapid population growth in Maricopa County, district and college leadership began planning in the late 1990's for a new bond referendum for 2004. Each college contracted with architectural firms to engage in a multi-year process to develop a facilities master plan. (*See Resource Room: MCC Master Plan 2002-2022.*) At MCC, a series of updates and meetings was held over a two-year period in which college employees were informed about, and provided input regarding, the facilities master plan. During this process, a set of 10 facilities planning

assumptions was developed at MCC and these drove the master planning process. (*See Resource Room: Facilities Master Planning Assumptions.*)

Throughout 2004, a bond campaign was conducted by the District in order to educate the public about the upcoming election, the purposes of the bond referendum, and how bond monies would be expended. In November 2004, the \$951 million district bond referendum passed, with 76% of Maricopa County voters supporting it. MCC's share of the bond was \$111 million or 12% of the total, planned to be allocated for new construction and further renovation of the Southern and Dobson campus; construction of new classrooms, laboratories and offices at the Red Mountain campus; expansion of the college's presence in downtown Mesa; and technology and equipment. College leadership points out that this \$111 million represents 12% of the total bond amount, again far short of the 26% of total district FTSE generated by MCC. While the passage of the bond election will help the college address many of its facilities needs, the total MCC allocation still falls short of enabling the college to deal with the many renovation needs of aging buildings and the new construction needed at both comprehensive campuses.

In November 2004, the \$951 million district bond referendum passed, with 76% of Maricopa County voters supporting it.

INVESTMENT IN TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Technology is one of the 12 college strategic goals and states, "Use technology to ensure access to current knowledge, foster human connections, and enhance learning." One major source of evidence of the linkage of funding allocations to planning is the annual allocation of capital funds used to purchase new equipment and technology. These decisions are based upon departmental plans and the college strategic plan, and each year a summary document is prepared which directly links capital allocations to college strategic goals and objectives. (*See Resource Room: Budget-Capital Allocations.*)

MCC has a long history of instructional innovation to support student learning, and the rapid pace of technology development over the past decade has resulted in significant resource demands. While computer technology is only one aspect of technological innovation, examination of the college's investment in computer technology over the past 10 years provides an excellent example of both capacity and commitment. In the mid-1990's, MCC had fewer than 500 student computer workstations in classrooms and laboratories. By academic year 2003-04, this number had grown to almost 3,000 – a significant infusion of technology to support the teaching and learning innovation driven by faculty and student expectations. Considerable capital funds have supported the development of a Computer

Preparing for the Future

Graphics lab in the Art Department, a new Language Lab in the Foreign Language Department, a Geographic Information Systems lab in the Cultural Science Department, and an Academic Skills Center lab which is shared by the English and Reading Departments. Significant investments were made in upgrading and expanding instructional computing equipment to support the Network Academy, expansion of the Psychology Instructional Resource Center in the Psychology Department, upgrade and expansion of the Business Department's Multi-use Lab, and the addition of classroom projection systems in the majority of classrooms. MCC has invested \$10,000 to become a member of the Sakai Educational Partnership Program, a collaboration of colleges and universities experimenting with solutions in Uportal, Open Source Portfolio Initiative, and the Sakai open source course management system. Furthermore, initiatives proposed in the planning and budgeting process have provided students with increased access to a wide array of online classes in a growing distance learning program.

Academic computing functions, which include instructional learning technologies, instructional content and pedagogies, distance learning, and the Center for Teaching and Learning, are under the administrative area of the Dean of Instruction. A search is in progress for a new position, Associate Dean of Instruction for Learning Technologies, and this person will have operational oversight for these areas.

Information Technology Services is responsible for all college administrative computing including network services, application development, web services, strategic systems, server management and security, desktop services, and the helpdesk. The department reports to the Dean of Administrative Services. Over the past 10 years, the department has initiated the student ID card project which provides a permanent student record as well as access to many instructional computing resources. Since 1995, two new network infrastructure upgrades have been completed; the current CISCO systems hardware and software offer

video conferencing, voice, and video streaming. The network supports over 3000 computers and another 2000 pieces of peripheral equipment. A wide area network provides a high speed wireless connection to the Red Mountain campus, and there are a total of over 80 wireless access points at both campuses. Currently over 300 wireless users regularly access the wireless network, and this number is expected to grow rapidly.

The MyMCC portal is an integrated workspace that provides faculty, students and staff with the tools needed to communicate electronically and access web-based instructional materials and applications.

The MyMCC portal is an integrated workspace that provides faculty, students and staff with the tools needed to communicate electronically and access web-based instructional materials and applications. The portal

also supports course management systems such as WEBCT and WebBoard, email and conferencing.

In lieu of a traditional telephone system, a VoIP (voice over internet protocol) system was deployed at the Red Mountain campus, and VoIP is being phased in at the Southern and Dobson campus. This system has the ability to integrate regular phone capability with student systems, such as dialup rosters that can be accessed by faculty, and also incorporates several security features. Another security feature supported by ITS is the recent installation of a high tech video surveillance network at both campuses which utilizes fiber optic cabling and a cutting edge IP network. It allows for video surveillance footage to be viewed on computers, and enables Public Safety to closely monitor most high traffic areas of the properties.

The Media Services Department is responsible for college-wide telecommunications, sound and video systems, the library media collection, media productions, and equipment delivery, repair and storage. In the past decade, the major renovation of the old library allowed the Media Services space to triple from 2,000 to 6,000 square feet which includes two video-conferencing rooms. The department has installed projection systems in many classrooms, large sound systems in eight presentation classrooms, and a music production studio and video systems in five classrooms. They produce video productions of virtually all major college events and performances, and selected events are transmitted live to numerous campus locales and computer desktops. The campus cable network is a television cable delivery system that distributes videotape playbacks, news and other cable services, and satellite teleconferences and programs. An interactive videoconferencing connection is used for meetings between the Red Mountain and Southern and Dobson campuses.

Every faculty and staff member in the college has an up-to-date desktop workstation, ordered to meet the usage needs of the individual. Considerable investments have been made in the facilities, equipment, and staffing levels in the Center for Teaching and Learning which supports faculty and staff in instructional technology innovation. In the past five years, a total of \$6.8 million in capital funds have been allocated to computing technology, with the vast majority of that directly supporting teaching and learning. Clearly, the college has invested heavily in achieving its strategic goal for technology.

Survey data reveal the perception and satisfaction of MCC faculty and students related to these technology resources. Faculty were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with a number of technology-related items, and results are shown in Table 4-3.

Table 4-3

MCC FACULTY SURVEY RESULTS SATISFACTION WITH TECHNOLOGY SPRING 2004			
<i>Item: Extent to which you agree with these statements.</i>	Percent Saying Agree or Strongly Agree		
	Full-Time Faculty	Adjunct Faculty	Total
The college supports innovation in teaching and learning.	85%	81%	83%
I have adequate opportunities to learn about new technologies for teaching.	90%	87%	89%
<i>Item: Extent to which you are satisfied with these items.</i>	Percent Saying Satisfied or Very Satisfied		
Center for Teaching and Learning	86%	94%	89%
Computer hardware and software resources	68%	73%	70%
Computer labs	61%	69%	64%
Media Services	78%	80%	79%
MyMCC Portal	77%	90%	83%

These results suggest that a large majority of both full-time and part-time faculty at MCC agree that the college supports innovation and the professional development that supports it. While all ratings are above 60% satisfied, faculty express highest satisfaction with their opportunities to learn and lowest satisfaction with computer labs. This is not surprising considering the growing student population, high demand on computer lab facilities, and diminishing capital dollars from the 1994 bond. Capital generated from the 2004 bond election will allow the college to update some dated technologies and keep pace with emerging learning technology developments. The Student Assessment of the College Environment (SACE) survey shows student ratings consistent with those of faculty.

Comparisons between the 2000 survey and the 2003 survey show that students overall are quite satisfied with the quality of laboratories and computer labs. Ratings of instructional laboratories increased between 2000 and 2003, from 3.65 to 3.74 (5-pt. scale). Ratings of computer labs and computer services, while remaining relatively high, were lower in 2003: computer lab ratings went from 3.95 to 3.87, and computer services ratings went from 3.91 to 3.81. (*See Resource Room: SACE Surveys.*) Interview data from department directors and managers in Student Services and Administrative Services regarding technology showed extensive use of a wide array of technology resources throughout the college and a recognition of easy access to these resources. (*See Resource Room: Director/Manager Interviews.*)

INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

The fact that 88% of the General Fund budget is expended on salaries and benefits demonstrates the college's investment in its human resources. Over a ten-year period from 1995 to 2004, the number of full-time employees at the college has increased by 206 positions, from 473 to 679. College-wide, the number of full-time faculty positions increased by 95 during the ten years. With the addition of the new Red Mountain campus, a decision was made to share human resources across the two campuses to the extent possible. Faculty members have primary assignments at one of the two campuses, but some faculty members have split loads and teach at both. In fall 2004, 24 full-time faculty members had primary assignments at Red Mountain. Some staff and MAT positions are charged directly to the Red Mountain budget and perform their job responsibilities specifically for that campus, but many employees funded through the Southern and Dobson budget have responsibilities at both campuses.

The college Human Resources (HR) Department coordinates all hiring activities and ensures that the Maricopa District hiring policies are followed. College HR staff members place recruitment advertisements, prepare screening paperwork, and work closely with all hiring committees to ensure adherence to district policies and EEOC regulations. Hiring committee membership must have a balance of gender and ethnicity; every committee is required to have two members representing a racial/ethnic minority group. Committees are generally large, and a typical administrator or faculty hiring committee has eight to 10 members. The committees interview candidates identified through a systematic screening process and recommend finalists to be interviewed by the college president who makes the final hiring decisions (in collaboration with deans and other appropriate individuals).

The hiring process requires adherence to district policies which involve numerous approvals and stages. The process can be difficult and prolonged, especially for faculty positions which can take eight to ten months; this has sometimes resulted in losing well qualified candidates to other institutions. Furthermore, due to the limited number of new faculty positions allocated by the District each year for the past several years, the increase in the number of full-time faculty has not kept pace with the increase in enrollment, and reliance on adjunct faculty has risen considerably. In 1998 (the first year for which comparable trend data is available), 45% of the total credit load was taught by full-time faculty. By 2004, this percentage had decreased to 38% of the credit load. (*See Resource Room: Staffing Reports.*) In fall 2004, over 900 adjunct faculty members taught classes at MCC. Adjunct faculty are a valuable asset to the college, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise to the classroom.

However, pay for adjunct faculty in the Maricopa District is lower than that paid at the public universities and proprietary schools in the area, and maintaining a sufficient pool of well qualified adjuncts is an ongoing challenge. Additionally, because adjunct faculty are not expected to serve on college committees and otherwise contribute to building a sense of community, increasing reliance on them is viewed as problematic.

Several changes have occurred at the college and district levels in order to address the full-time to adjunct ratio concern. One change is the newly adopted district faculty allocation formula. Under the new formula, if a college creates and funds up to three new faculty positions over and above their base allocation from the District, they will be matched one-for-one with additional positions from the District. For the next academic year, MCC created the maximum three additional lines and will have six additional faculty hires over and above the other six positions awarded based upon FTSE growth. Additionally, the District has moved the deadline for college faculty hiring decisions from spring semester to fall semester, thus allowing departments to begin their searches for new faculty hires many months earlier. Finally, the MCC administration is preparing a special request for a supplementary budget for Red Mountain that includes 48 new faculty positions for that campus over the next five years. Collectively, these changes provide evidence of MCC's commitment to expediting the hiring process and addressing the ratio of full-time faculty as the college continues to grow.

INVESTMENT IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

One of the 12 strategic goals of the college states, "Expand opportunities for the professional development of all employees." Mesa Community College invests in all its employees – faculty, staff, and administrators – by providing extensive opportunities for them to further their knowledge and skills. (*See Resource Room: Professional Development.*) Numerous individuals have benefited from professional development as well as advancement on the salary schedule and financial support to defray the costs of tuition for advanced education. This section includes examples of the ways in which the college invests in employee professional development; a more extensive analysis of this area is presented in Chapter 6.

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), referenced earlier as a technology resource, is also a major professional development resource for all employees at the college. The CTL supports employees who wish to learn new pedagogies, engage in scholarly pursuits, experiment with technological innovations to support teaching and learning, and become familiar with the college culture. Two of its newest programs are the New Faculty

Experience and the New Employee Orientation Program, both of which are designed to acculturate newly hired individuals to college life. All MCC employees can attend CTL seminars and workshops, obtain one-on-one consultation, or use the facility as a venue for dialogues about a wide array of topics.

Other avenues for professional development are numerous. The Chair Academy is a national center for leadership development and training housed at MCC, and many employees participate in the leadership academies. The Educational Development Program (EDP) and Kaleidoscope Project both allow faculty time to develop innovative projects to improve teaching effectiveness. While EDP is usually limited to summer projects, Kaleidoscope is supported through release time over a year's time span. The Maricopa District also provides a wide range of learning opportunities open to MCC employees including sabbaticals, Learning Grants, the Faculty in Progress Program, and Creative Pathways. Student Services staff can develop leadership skills by participating in the district-sponsored Student Services Institute.

Each employee group is allocated Professional Growth Funds which directly support activities such as attendance at professional conferences; applications are approved by peer review committees. A review of professional growth budgets shows that MCC's share of professional growth funds increased steadily from 1996-97 to 2002-03. Over this seven year period, the total amount increased 134%, from \$64,300 to \$150,300. These figures do not include tuition reimbursement which is reimbursed through payroll. The 2004 employee survey revealed a high level of participation in professional development activities for all employee groups, and for all employees responding, 77% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I have adequate opportunities to continue my professional development."

*... for all employees responding,
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development."*

These examples provide ample evidence that MCC utilizes its human resources effectively by allowing individuals to advance, nurturing creativity in the workplace, and facilitating personal improvement. The college constantly prepares for the future through a continual process that creates an innovative atmosphere where the status quo is rarely sufficient. MCC has invested heavily in its strategic goal of Employee Professional Development, to "Expand opportunities for the professional development of all employees." Professional development and life long learning are addressed in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

INVESTMENT IN THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

MCC's strategic goal regarding the physical environment states, "Provide a safe, secure, and aesthetically pleasing environment for working, teaching, and learning." The majority of the physical environment consists of the 35-year-old main campus at Southern and Dobson and a new branch campus at Red Mountain; a number of other off-campus course sites are located in leased space in downtown Mesa and in Tempe. The college recently has been engaged in a series of feasibility studies focused on establishing a more prominent presence in downtown Mesa as part of the city's downtown redevelopment. (*See Resource Room: Downtown Campus documents and Hunter Report.*) The college's capacity to complete facility expansions and remodeling/renovation projects was dramatically enhanced by the District bond referendum which funds such capital projects. In preparation for the November 2004 bond, an MCC Master Plan 2002-2022 was completed, and this section of the report relies heavily on the content included in that document. (*See Resource Room: MCC Master Plan 2002-2022.*)

The Southern and Dobson campus is landlocked, located on 145 acres in a relatively stable mixed-use area with commercial renovation to the east, a large medical/hospital complex to the west, aging commercial properties to the north, and the Superstition Freeway to the south. The area is transitioning from suburban to urban as the perimeter of the metropolitan area sprawls outward and is experiencing "re-densification," the consolidation of small businesses into large commercial, office, and housing developments. With Dobson Road serving as a link among three freeways, easy access to the campus is expected to ensure continued growth in student enrollments.

The Southern and Dobson campus consists of nearly 700,000 square feet of classroom, office, and support space. Space usage data provided by the Maricopa District show that space is used very efficiently and is at a premium. Most classroom space is at maximum usage at peak hours in the morning and evening; office and support space is very limited and many staff work in crowded quarters. According to the Master Plan, "MCC has been consistently able to get the most teaching out of the least space of any college in the District." The national recommendation for space usage is 90-100 sq. ft./FTSE; the District average is 85 sq. ft./FTSE; and Southern and Dobson's ratio is 55 sq. ft./FTSE.

Students attending the Southern and Dobson campus who participated in the SACE survey rated the overall domain of administrative and physical resources right at the national average for like institutions, 3.52. Adequate parking is a source of concern for students who rate it the lowest of all items queried on the SACE, with a mean satisfaction score of 2.42

on a 5-point scale. Students attending classes during the day were significantly more satisfied with a number of physical amenities overall than students attending in the evening. One exception to this pattern was satisfaction with parking, where evening students were more satisfied.

The Southern and Dobson Master Plan addresses the full range of future facility planning issues such as new construction, remodeling, parking, infrastructure, and clustering disciplines with curricular similarities into common areas that share space and amenities. If fully executed over the next 20 years, it would result in the addition of about one million square feet, which would more than double the square footage of the existing campus.

Two years after the Red Mountain campus was approved by the HLC as a degree granting location, it was full to capacity and the need for additional classroom space became pressing.

The Red Mountain campus is located on 98 acres in a natural desert setting in northeast Mesa, an area of rapid residential expansion. Master planning for the new campus began in 1995 and included MCC faculty and staff as well as a community advisory group that remains active today. Environmental responsibility was one of the original planning principles for the campus. The campus facilities currently comprise 109,000 square feet that includes four new buildings, one portable classroom building, and four remodeled older structures where classes were offered prior to the building of the new campus; these buildings, named Acacia Village, continue to be used for classroom space. Two years after the Red Mountain campus was approved by the HLC as a degree granting location, it was full to capacity and the need for additional classroom space became pressing. In fall 2003, headcount reached 3,741 students and a portable building accommodating four classrooms was installed on the west side of the new campus to alleviate crowding. The Master Plan build out anticipates a total building area of 400,000 square feet, excluding Acacia Village which is expected to become too maintenance intensive. The build out would accommodate 12,000 credit students. With the passage of the 2004 bond referendum, significant progress will be made on the next building phase for Red Mountain.

Maintenance and Operations (M & O) employees play a major role in keeping the buildings and grounds at both campuses clean and well-maintained. A discussion group with over 20 representatives from M & O revealed a strong understanding of how their work supports the college mission, as exemplified by these statements:

- We provide the ambience for the campuses.
- We help create an environment where students want to come to campus.

Preparing for the Future

- We provide a service to everyone, including the President of the United States. (*Referring to preparations for a campus visit by President George W. Bush.*)

They expressed a keen awareness of the demands of keeping up with facilities that are aging and the pressures of maintaining buildings open for long hours, some as late as midnight.

Ensuring the safety and security of both physical property and people is particularly resource intensive and has become an even more important college priority in the era of terrorism and homeland security. To that end, two new departments – Health and Safety and Property Control – staffed by four full-time employees have been created to help ensure college compliance with health, safety and property protection regulations. One example of a recent security upgrade is a state of the art closed circuit television system to monitor activity on and around both campuses which was installed in summer 2004. The majority of the 48 cameras are mounted around the perimeter of the campuses in an effort to deter theft and other illegal activity in the parking lots. The images are continually monitored throughout the day. The cost of the installation of the CCTV system was approximately \$300,000.

In summary, MCC has a long history of facility master planning coupled with funding. Facility usage data and master planning documents reveal a serious commitment of funds to the physical resources of the college. Developing and maintaining the college's physical facilities and supporting infrastructure (e.g., heating and cooling, phone systems, computer networks, and landscaping) are extremely resource intensive. Space utilization data show that MCC is far below district and national averages for recommended square feet per student equivalent. Despite this fact, the college has been able to provide quality educational programs to meet growing student demand over the past decade, and students express overall satisfaction with college facilities. Extended campus course locations have helped alleviate the space crunch by placing courses at convenient locations in the community. In collaboration with Mesa city officials, studies have been conducted to determine the feasibility of establishing a more prominent MCC presence in downtown Mesa, increasing off-campus course offerings even more. The passage of the 2004 bond will allow the college to pursue the downtown partnership in earnest.

INVESTMENT IN QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

All of the descriptive and evidentiary information presented thus far in this chapter points to the college's commitment of resources to support its fundamental mission, "to promote excellence in teaching and learning." General fund and capital expenditures data show how

staffing, human resource development, and technology and equipment acquisitions directly align with the college's mission, values and strategic goals. The 12 college strategic goals are built around the core value of learning; departments develop their plans around these strategic goals, and budgetary decisions flow from the plans. Thus, a continuous cycle of budgeting aligned with planning assures the desired end product, excellence in teaching and learning.

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Surveys conducted by the Maricopa District show that county residents and MCCCDC employees are satisfied with the Maricopa Colleges as stewards of public funds. In fall 2002, the Maricopa District contracted with an external research firm to conduct a countywide survey of registered voters to ascertain community perceptions toward the community colleges. Of those polled, 87% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way MCCCDC spends tax dollars. In a similar survey of district employees conducted in 2004, 78% said they were satisfied or very satisfied with how the colleges spend taxpayers' money. (See *Resource Room: Surveys of district wide residents and employees.*) Finally, the overwhelming voter support for the 2004 bond referendum is perhaps the most compelling evidence of community support for Mesa Community College and its programs and services.

Core Component 2c: Mesa Community College has ongoing evaluation and assessment processes that provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness and clearly inform strategies for continuous improvement.

Assessment and evaluation are integral to MCC's continuous planning cycle, as illustrated in the planning process diagram shown in Figure 4-1. Over the past decade, assessment and evaluation activities have become increasingly more systematic and directly relate to the college mission, values and goals. The terminology of assessment and evaluation in higher education can sometimes be confusing, even contradictory. Therefore, an attempt has been made at MCC to define these terms to ensure a common understanding among members of the college community. Institutional effectiveness has been formally defined as a "comprehensive evaluation of the degree to which the entire college is accomplishing all aspects of its educational mission." And because of the college's significant student outcomes assessment agenda, assessment has been defined to mean, "The measurement and documentation of the degree to which students are attaining specific learning outcomes defined and valued by faculty and the college community." The ultimate purpose of assessment and evaluation at the college is to provide valid and credible information that can be used by college constituents to make decisions, continually inform their planning, and

improve programs, services, and, ultimately, learning.

The MCC Office of Research and Planning (ORP) plays a major role in providing timely, accurate, and user-friendly data for decision making. The ORP staff is responsible for coordinating and implementing the majority of college-wide assessment and evaluation efforts, including design, administration, analysis, and reporting. Because the ORP is also responsible for facilitating all levels of college planning, the link between planning and assessment and evaluation is assured as a relatively seamless feedback loop. This section summarizes the major activities undertaken in the past 10 years.

COLLEGE-WIDE STUDENT OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Assessment occurs at many levels within the college: classroom, course, and program. The focus of the college-wide student outcomes assessment is to assess the overall performance of

Results of the outcomes assessments allow the college to document what impact the MCC college experience has on student learning and to determine ways to improve programs and where to allocate resources.

students enrolled in general education, career and technical, and developmental education programs. Assessment involves direct measures of student learning outcomes, although an array of indirect measures are also collected in order to provide a complete picture of both academic performance and the academic experience at the college. Results of the outcomes assessments allow the college to document what impact the MCC college experience has on student learning and to determine ways to improve programs and where to allocate resources. Use of results has been formalized in a number of ways, including being incorporated into the department planning process as well as being attached to a formal funding stream. This faculty-driven assessment program has become one

of the cornerstones of the college's academic program. It is discussed in detail in several sections of this report, particularly in Chapter 5.

PROGRAM REVIEW

Every successful organization must continually determine if it is accomplishing what it sets out to do. This fundamental logic underlies program review which is necessary for the health and continuous improvement of a program. Program review at MCC is most formalized in the career and technical areas which follow the guidelines published in the Program Review Handbook. (See Resource Room: Program Review Handbook.) Program reviews are conducted every year at the college, with individual programs on a four-year rotating cycle; reviews are conducted by the academic department having jurisdiction over the program. The program review process includes developing formal statements of the programmatic mission and goals, stating two types of programmatic outcomes (effectiveness

outcomes and student learning outcomes), gathering data about those outcomes, and developing recommendations about the future of the program based on the data collected.

While the specific components of program reviews vary with each program, the reviews typically involve gathering and presenting a wealth of trend data about the program (e.g., enrollments, sections, staffing); conducting surveys of program completers, alumni, and employers; and assessing student learning outcomes for skills and abilities specific to the program. Outcomes might be assessed through capstone projects, portfolios, certification or licensure exams, or a variety of other assessment techniques. Advisory board members are relied upon to provide feedback about the currency and relevancy of programs and to make suggestions for program changes in response to workforce demands. Program reviews have resulted in a number of significant recommendations for program changes and improvements that have been implemented. As just one example, results from the Fire Science Academy program review indicated a need to develop a degree program specifically designed for professional fire fighters. The following year, this became an initiative in the department plan and the development phase subsequently began. Program review is an important element of the college's assessment and evaluation process; it is discussed in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6. (*See Resource Room: Program Reviews.*)

PROGRAM AND SERVICE EVALUATIONS

In addition to program review for career and technical programs, numerous other specialized programs and services that target specific populations are regularly evaluated to determine if they are achieving their goals. Many of the program evaluations are designed and conducted by the Office of Research and Planning, in collaboration with a program director, faculty member or administrator. Following are examples of evaluations conducted to determine the effectiveness of specific college programs and services and how they can be improved. (*See Resource Room: Program Evaluations.*)

- The Center for Service Learning evaluates the impact of the service learning experience on students who participate. This is accomplished through a pre-post survey administered once each academic year. Results are analyzed by the Office of Research and Planning and used by the Director of the Center for Service Learning and the Advisory Committee to make recommendations for program improvements.
- The Learning Enhancement Center, which provides tutoring services college-wide, annually evaluates the services provided through its center by conducting a student survey in which students rate the quality of services

Preparing for the Future

received and the impact of services on their academic performance. Results are prepared by staff and used by the LEC Director and staff to document the effectiveness of services and identify areas for improvement.

- All students who apply for graduation complete a graduate exit survey. Students rate the quality of student services received while at the college, the overall quality of the college experience, and the degree to which they feel prepared to transfer or enter the workforce. Data are shared with and used by appropriate department managers.
- Students enrolled in online courses complete a survey in which they rate their overall experience taking classes delivered via the internet.
- A number of ad hoc evaluations are conducted to determine the effectiveness of special college initiatives or pilot projects. For example, an evaluation of the Red Mountain Assistant Department Chair pilot program provided information used to make decisions about the effectiveness of the program, whether it should be continued, and how it could be improved.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS

The Office of Research and Planning generates numerous regular reports which provide timely and accurate data about students, employees, and the community. Examples include enrollment trends (overall and by department, prefix and site), demographic trends, course completion reports, and staffing/faculty load reports. The office also reports on several indicators of institutional effectiveness which assist the college in determining whether its mission is being achieved. These include reports on university transfer, degrees and certificates awarded, and developmental education. The ORP also prepares a variety of customized reports upon request that provide background or support data for numerous college agendas and initiatives. Several surveys and other data collection efforts were undertaken as part of the self-study process; the majority of these were designed, conducted and reported through the research office. Reports are shared with department chairs, faculty, administrators, and staff and are used to inform department planning and decision making on many topics of importance to the college. A summary document presents college-level data about several institutional effectiveness indicators and trends. *(See Resource Room: Focus on Effectiveness.)*

Reports are shared with department chairs, faculty, administrators, and staff and are used to inform department planning and decision making on many topics of importance to the college.

The Student Assessment of the College Environment (SACE) is a college-wide survey of student satisfaction that provides MCC with an overall student evaluation of the college and

its wide array of programs and services. The survey containing five domains (instructional services, student services, administrative and physical services, student focus, and social and cultural services) measured by 58 items; 10 additional customized items were developed by the college. The SACE was administered to a random sample of over 3,000 students enrolled in day and evening sections during fall 2000 and again in fall 2003. Results are reported in formal written reports as well as research briefs and are widely disseminated throughout the college community. In addition to providing overview data about student satisfaction, the SACE also allows the college to identify specific strengths and areas for improvement. These results are used by departments to improve services, thus demonstrating how one part of the feedback loop is completed. For example, the 2000 SACE results showed relatively low student satisfaction with advising. As a result, a number of changes were implemented within the advisement area, and results from the 2003 administration of the SACE showed a significant improvement in student ratings of advisement. (*See Resource Room: SACE Survey.*)

OTHER EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

All Maricopa employee groups have performance evaluation processes which are conducted on a regular basis (see Chapter 3); the underlying principle for employee evaluations is professional improvement. (*See Resource Room: Employee Group Manuals.*) Credit courses are evaluated regularly by students and this feedback is used by faculty members for course improvement. Non-credit courses are evaluated through a course evaluation form developed by the Center for Community Education. Individual functional areas that provide programs and services collect, analyze and use data on an almost daily basis from students and others who access their services in order to monitor usage patterns, customer satisfaction, and attainment of specific department goals.

In summary, Mesa Community College relies heavily upon assessment and evaluation activities to document its effectiveness in achieving its mission. Assessment and evaluation have been defined, qualified staff have been hired with expertise in these areas to support such college initiatives, and resources have been committed to ensure that assessment and evaluation are an integral part of the planning cycle and feedback system. No one source of data or information is viewed as the sole source. Rather, the feedback system makes use of a range of quantitative and qualitative methods and techniques that allow the decision makers to examine patterns of evidence to support decisions.

Preparing for the Future

Core Component 2d: All levels of planning align with Mesa Community College's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

MCC's mission and values are directly aligned with the college strategic plan and the 12 strategic goals. College mission and planning documents are also consistent with the Maricopa District mission and strategic directions. As described throughout this chapter, all levels of planning are comprehensive, systematic, and interlocking. Planning drives budgeting decisions including allocation of resources for staffing and other operational expenses, technology, capital equipment and improvements, and facility renovation and construction.

Planning is highly participatory. At the department level, department chairs and unit managers involve their faculty and staff members in setting departmental priorities and directions. The college strategic planning, operational planning, and budgeting processes involve representatives from all employee groups and all administrative areas. Community members and students contribute to the planning process through a number of different avenues, including active community advisory groups and the student government organization. All plans are updated annually, and planning documents are widely disseminated and easily accessible both in print and electronically.

Continuous scanning of the internal and external environments allows the college to stay abreast of trends, issues, and events that are likely to have an impact on college directions and priorities. These include national, regional, and local trends related to the economy, education, technology, and social and political issues. Many of these trends influence new programmatic directions.

Perhaps most important to planning at MCC is that the mission, values, strategic plan, department plans, and operational plans are focused around the central and fundamental principal of learning. Student learning, and ensuring the successful achievement of explicitly stated student learning outcomes, is the college's primary responsibility. But learning is pervasive throughout the organization – learning for faculty, staff, and members of the larger community. Throughout this report, evidence is cited for how planning has resulted in comprehensive programs and services focused on learning at Mesa Community College.

SUMMARY

Long term strategic and operational planning, once identified as an area in need of improvement, has become an outstanding strength within Mesa Community College. Input

is gathered and coordinated through a wide variety of methods, with the aim of ensuring that every person connected to the college has the opportunity to anticipate future needs and contribute to the betterment of the institution. All employee groups, students, and community stakeholders are engaged in ongoing evaluation of the success of MCC in fulfilling its primary mission and actualizing its values.

Chapter 4 outlines in detail the numerous methods used to collect as much feedback information as possible, the methods used to solicit input from the academic departments regarding future needs, and the integration of these department plans, the college operational plan, and the college's overall strategic plan. This integration proceeds in a cyclical rather than linear fashion and has been systemically incorporated into the decision-making process and resource planning. Furthermore, planning drives budgeting decisions and has resulted in major investments in the initiatives deemed most important to the good of the college as a whole. Even with constraints – financial, human and physical – MCC has the capacity to manage growth and change effectively and consonant with institutional mission and values.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Mesa Community College has implemented a comprehensive planning process that is dynamic, participatory, and drives budgeting and decision making. Planning is based upon regular environmental scanning as well as data from systematic institutional assessment and evaluation processes.

The college has enjoyed financial stability at a time when many institutions of higher education are experiencing severe financial cutbacks. A successful bond in 1994 allowed MCC to build a second comprehensive campus, construct new buildings on the existing campus, and fund new technology initiatives. The passage of the 2004 bond referendum demonstrates the public's satisfaction with the community colleges as stewards of public funds and will enable MCC to complete many of the additional capital improvements for which it has planned.

At the same time, burgeoning growth has strained some of the college's systems. In terms of human resources, MCC has had to rely more and more heavily on adjunct faculty to support the addition of courses, programs and sites; the percentage of course load taught by full-time faculty is declining. In addition, the hiring process is extremely cumbersome and time consuming, sometimes resulting in the loss of qualified candidates. Approaches are in

Preparing for the Future

place to address these issues, but diligence will be required to assure the ratio of full-time and part-time faculty is in balance to maintain quality for the future.

Notwithstanding the passage of the 2004 bond referendum, the college will be challenged to make wise decisions in capital and technology investments. Faculty, staff and students have a seemingly insatiable appetite for new technologies, and strong leadership will be required to ensure that technology planning leads to allocations that are necessary, appropriate, and learning-centered. In addition, the facts of aging buildings at the Southern and Dobson campus, the severe crunch for space college wide, and parking issues must be addressed in a coherent and systematic manner. Decisions will need to be driven by institutional priorities and good planning.

Chapter 5

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

- Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
- Support for Effective Teaching
- College Learning Environments
- Resources for Teaching and Learning



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Criterion 3: Mesa Community College provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

INTRODUCTION

Mesa Community College's commitment to excellence in learning and teaching is deeply imbedded in its history and culture. Learning is central to the college and is clearly articulated in the mission, values, and strategic plan. Quality instruction is a primary college-wide strategic goal. The college recognizes that learning and teaching cannot be separated; the two are interrelated and in many ways define each other. This interactive nature of learning and teaching makes static definitions and practices problematic. Hence, the college approaches both learning and teaching with an innovative and interconnected spirit. Mesa Community College has moved beyond the rhetoric of the "new learning paradigm" and actualizes it in a myriad of ways through its programs, services, resources and physical environment.

This chapter addresses how the college fulfills the most fundamental aspect of its mission – excellence in teaching and learning. The chapter describes, and presents evidence to support, some of the most significant examples of how the college meets the criterion through discussions of student learning outcomes, outcomes assessment and use of results, teaching effectiveness, learning environments and learning resources.

"The mission of Mesa Community College is to promote excellence in teaching and learning..."

- from the college mission

"Mesa Community College values learning and scholarship for our students, our employees, and the community. We value personal growth and provide access to diverse learning experiences in a supportive environment. We seek to continuously learn as an organization and to be responsive to our changing environment."

- from the college values

"Learning is the heart of our mission and is central to all we do as a college..."

- from the college strategic plan

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Core Component 3a: Mesa Community College's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

Student learning outcomes at MCC are stated and defined at several levels. Programmatic student learning outcomes are defined and measured as part of the college-wide assessment program. Course-level objectives for every course are defined through a comprehensive and systematic curriculum development process described later in this section. Specific learning objectives for individual classes are defined and assessed by the faculty member teaching the class and are the purview of that faculty member.

The focus of this chapter is on the major activities related to how the college has defined student learning outcomes and the assessment of those outcomes, with an emphasis on programmatic and institutional level assessment activities. A series of annual reports beginning in 1996-97 provides a detailed history of college-wide outcomes assessment including a description of the evolving plan, its subsequent implementation, methodology, data analysis, and presentation of the results. (*See Resource Room: Annual Assessment Reports, 1996-97 through 2003-04 and supporting assessment materials.*)

OVERVIEW OF MCC'S COLLEGE-WIDE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The Mesa Community College program to assess student learning outcomes began with a college-wide planning process undertaken in preparation for the 1994-1995 accreditation self study and team visit from the North Central Association. Assessment of student learning outcomes at the college has evolved from this initial planning process to a comprehensive college-wide assessment program. For the past two years, the major emphasis of student outcomes assessment has been on ensuring the use of assessment results.

Through the assessment program, the college measures the extent to which students attain faculty-defined learning outcomes in three areas central to the college mission: general education, career and technical programs, and developmental education. It allows the college to document what impact the MCC college experience has on student learning and to answer the fundamental question, "As a result of a program of study at MCC, do students gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes valued by the college community?" MCC's assessment results provide a wealth of data documenting that students completing programs do perform significantly better than students beginning programs in all areas assessed.

The college's assessment program is the result of a close collaboration among faculty, administration and staff; it has been recognized nationally both for the process used to

develop it and for the assessment program itself. MCC faculty and administrators have been invited to present papers and conduct workshops about assessment at numerous national conferences over the past several years, including the American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forums, Chair Academy Conference, League for Innovation Conference, and HLC Annual Meetings. In the summer of 2000, MCC was invited by the League for Innovation in Community Colleges to participate in the 21st Century Learning Outcomes Project. Administrators and faculty members from other institutions frequently contact MCC to learn about the college's assessment approach; many groups have visited the college for this purpose. Most recently, the MCC assessment program was included in the book *Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution* (Maki, 2004). Maki states, "How collaborative tasks and decisions come together to launch a cycle of inquiry is well represented in ... the institutional example from Mesa Community College." She goes on to describe the college's Arts and Humanities assessment as the example.

MCC's assessment program was built upon a foundation of agreed-upon principles that resulted from intensive, and sometimes spirited, early discussions among committee members and the larger college community. One key principle was that college-wide student assessment would not be associated in any way with faculty evaluation. The college-wide student assessment program was designed to: 1) determine the overall impact of college curriculum and experiences on student academic achievement, 2) document student achievement of learning outcomes to constituents, and 3) improve student learning. By reaching consensus on these fundamental issues, the program was able to develop and mature in a positive direction.

The college-wide student assessment program was designed to: 1) determine the overall impact of college curriculum and experiences on student academic achievement, 2) document student achievement of learning outcomes to constituents, and 3) improve student learning.

A number of elements have been important to the program's success; these include:

- MCC faculty lead the program and are responsible for using the results;
- The chief academic officer articulates the value of assessment, strongly supports the program and provides the resources necessary for it to flourish;
- Commonly accepted research and assessment practices are followed – learning outcomes are well defined, measurement tools are selected or developed to align with the outcomes, and an appropriate research design is used;

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

- Measurement tools are pilot tested and refined based upon data analysis;
- Results are linked back to the planning process.

Assessment processes have been developed collaboratively and have been systematic, consistent and incremental. Both faculty and administrative leaders have promoted assessment processes, and a concerted effort has been made to continuously improve, sustain and institutionalize the program.

HISTORY OF THE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Academic year 2003-04 was the eighth year of implementing the college's program to assess student learning. The assessment program has evolved considerably since the original plan was drafted in 1994. The focus of assessment efforts has grown from the initial phases – defining learning outcomes, establishing sampling techniques, testing data collection methods, pilot testing and validating measurement tools – to the current phase of using results to improve teaching and learning at MCC. Ensuring the effective and appropriate use of assessment results is currently one of the college's most important priorities. Mesa Community College subscribes to the tenet that assessment results should be used to document the college's successes, identify weaknesses, and provide information that is a basis to improve student learning. As the assessment program has matured, assessment results have begun to be used by the faculty to improve course curriculum and instruction and by departments and the college for planning purposes. (Specific examples are provided later in this chapter.)

The college viewed assessment as a vehicle to positively influence the academic culture. At MCC, this meant a shift toward the centrality of student learning while retaining and valuing the interrelatedness of teaching and learning. The MCC Faculty Senate accepted and then embraced the idea and decided to create a Senate committee, the Student Outcomes Committee (SOC) in 1996. In an effort to increase awareness and involvement of all members of the college community, the SOC worked to establish Assessment Week as an annual event during which assessment data would be formally collected. During this week, banners are hung across campus announcing Assessment Week; advertisements, email announcements, posters, and the student newspaper are used to raise awareness that students and faculty alike are working to gather data about the impact of the overall educational experiences of MCC students.

A significant accomplishment occurred in academic year 2002-03 that provides a clear example of how the assessment program has begun to “close the loop” by formalizing the

use of assessment results. This example is the formation of the Results Outreach Committee (ROC, a sub-committee of SOC). The ROC was charged with exploring avenues for strengthening and formalizing the use of assessment results throughout the college community. With support from the Dean of Instruction, the committee defined their purpose and initiated discussions with the Student Outcomes Committee (SOC) concerning possible avenues for promoting the use of assessment results. A faculty survey was conducted to gather feedback about what types of activities would be meaningful, and faculty events were held to share examples of classroom-based use of assessment results. In spring 2004, ROC established a process for using assessment results which was approved by SOC, the Faculty Senate, and the Dean of Instruction. Budget was allocated and a pilot “call for proposals” was disseminated to all faculty members to submit proposals for projects specifically targeted to improving student learning based upon assessment results. Several proposals were submitted and two were funded for projects to be completed in summer and fall 2004. One project involved sponsoring activities to raise awareness of assessment results; the other focused on developing workshops to improve student writing skills across the disciplines. (*See Resource Room: Annual Assessment Report 2003-2004.*)

ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES

Once the assessment plan was modified and approved by the HLC in 1997, faculty immediately began implementation. They organized interdisciplinary general education “clusters” (i.e., groups of five to seven faculty members representing multiple disciplines) and, with support from the Office of Research and Planning, they developed explicit student outcomes that are interdisciplinary and above the course level. These program outcomes are not just a compilation of course objectives; rather they are holistic and reflect the cross-disciplinary learning that results from an entire course of study. The outcomes of the general education program describe in measurable terms what MCC students should know or be able to do at the completion of most of their general education coursework at the college. Interdisciplinary faculty clusters defined the general education student learning outcomes and then identified or developed assessment tools directly linked with those outcomes. The general education outcome areas are as follows; the specific outcomes statements are included in Chapter 6 and in the annual assessment reports:

- written and oral communication
- problem solving/critical thinking
- numeracy
- scientific inquiry

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

- arts and humanities
- cultural diversity
- information literacy

Assessment tools and methods were developed by teams of faculty, with support from the Office of Research and Planning for written and oral communication, numeracy, scientific inquiry, arts and humanities, and information literacy. A standardized critical thinking measure was selected that was closely aligned with the student outcomes for problem solving/critical thinking. For cultural diversity, an assessment was adapted (with permission) from a measurement tool developed as part of the Diverse Democracy Project at the University of Michigan.

In order to conduct general education assessments above the course level, it was necessary to define clearly the student population to be assessed and to select an appropriate research design. A cross-sectional research design is well-suited to the MCC context because it involves comparison of a sample of beginning students to a sample of completing students. From the total pool of students who take a general education assessment, a group of beginning students and a group of completing students is selected. Beginning (or pre-group) students have completed 10 or fewer hours and completing (or post-group) students have completed at least 30 hours of general education courses distributed across the required areas. For each assessment, pre and post student cohorts are identified using data provided by the students and data from the college student information system. Students are classified as general education students if they indicate that they attend MCC to complete a general education program that fulfills lower-division requirements, obtain a degree or earn core transfer credits for another school.

Assessment results over time show that students completing their general education program of studies perform significantly better than students beginning their general education at MCC.

Data are collected during Assessment Week, usually the last week of February each spring semester. Faculty members are recruited to volunteer sections that represent all general education disciplines and both 100- and 200-level courses. It is important to ensure that the general education program, and not a particular department, is being assessed. Therefore, measures that relate to particular disciplines are not administered in those classes (e.g., the numeracy assessment is not administered in mathematics classes). Measures are administered in regular classes by faculty who follow standard administration procedures.

Assessments are rotated every other year, with four administered each year. About 3,500 students participate in assessments each spring.

Assessment results over time show that students completing their general education program of studies perform significantly better than students beginning their general education at MCC. In addition to showing these between-group differences, specific patterns of strength and areas for improvement in student performance have been documented. When examining results across measures over several years, students demonstrate the most difficulty with skills involving the use, application and/or evaluation of knowledge. These areas have become the focus of college-wide efforts to improve student learning. Table 5-1 below is a summary of overall results by outcome area for the past four years. Detailed descriptions of all measures, data analysis techniques, validation procedures, and results are included in the annual assessment reports.

Table 5-1

SUMMARY OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT RESULTS 2001-2004				
OUTCOME	SPRING 2001	SPRING 2002	SPRING 2003	SPRING 2004
Arts & Humanities	■	■	■	■
Cultural Diversity	□	□	■	■
Oral Communication	■	■	■	■
Written Communication	■	■	■	■
Numeracy	■	■	■	■
Scientific Inquiry	■	■	■	■
Problem Solving/Critical Thinking	■	■	■	■
Information Literacy	■	■	■	■
Workplace Skills	□	■	■	■

■	Significant Results	■	No Significant Results
□	Pilot Year or In Development	■	Not Assessed This Academic Year

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

ASSESSMENT OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Student outcomes assessment within career and technical programs is comprised of two main components: assessment of program specific outcomes and workplace skills assessment. The assessment of program specific outcomes is one component of program review in career and technical programs. Program reviews include an overall evaluation of many aspects of the programs, and also specifically address program-specific student learning outcomes and direct measurement of them. (*See Resource Room: Program Review Handbook and Program Review Reports.*) A complete program review for each program occurs on a four-year cycle, but assessment of student learning outcomes within each program is conducted annually. The workplace skills represent “cross disciplinary” skills that would be expected outcomes for students across all career and technical programs.

The workplace skills outcomes defined by MCC faculty are listed below; the specific outcomes statements are included in Chapter 6 and the college assessment reports:

- ethics
- interpersonal skills
- critical thinking
- organization
- team work
- technology literacy
- personal and professional responsibility

The workplace skills assessment was derived from an item bank developed in Texas under funding from a Carl Perkins grant. MCC purchased the item bank, and faculty members aligned selected items with the student learning outcomes. Workplace skills are assessed in career and technical program courses using essentially the same methodology as that used for general education. Two cohorts of students are selected from the total sample for comparison based on their cumulative hours earned in a career and technical program. Results have consistently shown that students completing career and technical programs perform significantly better than students beginning the programs. (*See Resource Room: Annual Assessment Reports.*)

Program specific student learning outcomes are defined and assessed by faculty teaching in the career and technical programs. A wide range of assessment methods are used within the

individual programs. For example, student portfolios are used to assess programmatic student outcomes in the Graphic Arts and Interior Design programs. In a number of programs, external assessments based upon industry or professional standards are used as one benchmark of student achievement. For example, licensure and/or certification examinations are administered to students in Fire Science, Mortuary Science, the Network Academy, and Nursing programs. Results from such examinations provide valuable feedback to program directors about student performance on national assessments. Furthermore, such certifications are required for students to attain employment in these fields. The MCC annual assessment reports include summary data for several of the externally administered assessments.

ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

Developmental education at MCC consists of courses in English, mathematics, reading, communication, and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) which are designed specifically to prepare students to be successful in college-level work. These courses are designated by below-100 level course numbers. For English, mathematics and reading, ASSET/COMPASS placement tests are administered to new students enrolling in the college (and throughout the Maricopa District) and resulting “cut scores” are used to recommend placement in the appropriate developmental course. Placement into ESL courses, Levels I through V, is based upon scores on the Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA) placement test. By district policy, placement is not mandatory and students may request waivers, but individual departments may set their own waiver practices about placement in courses.

Early in the development of the assessment program, cross-disciplinary learning outcomes were defined and an assessment tool for developmental education was designed by several faculty members. Defining an appropriate population of students to participate in the assessment was difficult, and analysis of results from a large pilot test showed that the assessment tool did not have the necessary psychometric characteristics. (*See Resource Room: Annual Assessment Report 2000-2001.*) A subsequent search for appropriate measurement tools designed elsewhere did not surface a suitable alternative. Thus, it was decided that direct measures of student learning in developmental education would be assessed at the completion of the last course in the developmental course sequence for English, mathematics, and reading. In English and reading, these are developed and conducted by the individual faculty members responsible for the course. In the Mathematics Department, a pre-post course assessment was developed and administered and results show statistically significant increases in performance between the pre and post-tests. (*See Resource Room: Annual Assessment Report 2002-2003.*)

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

In addition, commonly used indirect measures of student learning for developmental education are analyzed annually and used as indicators of student learning. For example, in fall 2003 semester 5,490 students were enrolled in a below-100 level English, Reading, or Mathematics course. Fifty-six percent of these students successfully completed the course (with a grade of A,B,C or P). Of those who successfully completed, 74% were successful in a subsequent 100-level course in the following three semesters. (*See Resource Room: Focus on Effectiveness.*)

USE OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

There are several avenues for individual faculty members, departments, and the college as a whole to develop instructional approaches to address the assessment results. As part of the annual departmental planning process, department members review the assessment results and are encouraged to develop departmental initiatives to address them. In addition to integrating assessment results into departmental planning, each fall the Dean of Instruction holds an all-faculty meeting during which faculty review the assessment results from the prior spring and discuss the implications of those results for instruction. Results from the faculty survey provide examples of how some individual faculty members use assessment results in course planning. The most common example included an increased emphasis on developing critical thinking skills through course objectives and assignments. Others included creating assignments to address a specific college-wide outcome and using the results to revise course objectives. (*See Resource Room: Faculty Survey.*)

Finally, the Results Outreach Committee (ROC) issued an initial call for proposals in spring 2004. The call specified that “Proposals are for instructional initiatives or projects based on MCC’s outcomes assessment results. Preference will be given to proposals that involve interdisciplinary groups of faculty or entire departments and demonstrate a long-term benefit to students and the academic climate.” Funding for projects is provided by the Dean of Instruction. Two projects were funded as a result of the first call for proposals. One of these involves faculty members from the English Department who reviewed writing assignments from numerous disciplines and interviewed non-English Department faculty about how they assign and grade writing assignments. Using this information, along with results from the general education written communication assessment, they then developed a writing workshop series for faculty addressing how most effectively to assign and evaluate student writing across the disciplines.

EVALUATING THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND PROGRAM

MCC continuously examines its assessment process, and the Student Outcomes Committee

regularly engages in discussions about how the program can be improved. At the beginning of each year, the committee establishes goals to provide focus for that year's work and to ensure continuous development of the assessment agenda; at the end of the year, the goals are reviewed and reported in terms of whether or not they were accomplished. The committee uses both formal and informal feedback from faculty, students and staff to make decisions about the direction of the assessment program. One source of information is the feedback collected from each faculty member after administering an assessment. Faculty members write comments about what worked well and make suggestions for improving the process. These results are tabulated and reviewed by SOC and appropriate changes are made the subsequent year. (See Resource Room: Annual Assessment Reports.)

Faculty survey data about the assessment program is another source of evaluative information. Responses to a number of survey items on the 2004 faculty survey that relate directly to student outcomes assessment are shown in Table 5-2 below. (See Resource Room: Faculty Survey.)

These responses indicate positive faculty perceptions of MCC's assessment program, particularly among residential faculty members. The survey data show that a large majority of residential faculty view assessment as part of the college culture, are familiar with the outcomes

The survey data show that a large majority of residential faculty view assessment as part of the college culture, are familiar with the outcomes and the results, and think results are accessible.

Table 5-2

MCC FACULTY SURVEY RESULTS RESPONSES TO ASSESSMENT ITEMS SPRING 2004		
Item	Percent Saying Agree or Strongly Agree	
	Full-Time Faculty	Adjunct Faculty
Student outcomes assessment is viewed as part of the college culture.	80%	73%
I am familiar with the college's student learning outcomes for general education and workplace skills.	83%	48%
I am familiar with the results of the college-wide student outcomes assessment program.	80%	34%
Assessment results are readily accessible.	80%	50%
	Percent Saying Somewhat or a Great Deal	
I incorporate the college-wide student learning outcomes into my course(s).	69%	44%
I use assessment results from the college-wide assessments when planning my course(s).	51%	27%

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

and the results, and think results are accessible. There is a discrepancy between attitudes expressed by residential and adjunct faculty, indicating a need to increase the involvement of, and communication with, adjunct faculty concerning student outcomes assessment.

INDIRECT MEASURES OF STUDENT LEARNING

A number of additional data sources provide evidence of student academic achievement, and these are used regularly to supplement the information gleaned from the direct assessment of student learning outcomes. Each year, the Office of Research and Planning creates and disseminates reports for use by Department Chairs to examine the effectiveness of their courses and programs. These include reports on course completion, degrees and certificates awarded, student transfer to universities, and performance after transfer. Reports typically include institutional level summary data plus detailed analyses by department and discipline. (See *Resource Room: Institutional Effectiveness Reports*.) Through the analysis and triangulation of multiple sources of data, the college as a whole and individual departments are able to capture a total picture of student performance and make decisions about areas of strength and areas to be targeted for improvement. Examples of indirect measures include the following:

- **Graduation Exit Survey:** Upon application for graduation all students are asked to complete an online survey. In AY 2002-03, 64% of the students who participated in the graduate exit survey indicated that they intended to transfer to another school and 32% say that they will use their degree to begin a full-time career (23%) or change careers (9%). The share of students who say they are very well prepared for transfer increased from 53% in 2000 to 61% in 2004. The share of students who say they are very well prepared to enter the workforce increased from 53% in 2000 to 59% in 2004.
- **Student Assessment of the College Environment:** In 2003, the Student Assessment of the College Environment (SACE) was administered to 3,183 students enrolled in 125 randomly selected day and evening sections at Mesa Community Colleges Southern and Dobson and Red Mountain campuses. A total of 2,110 (63%) of the students completed the survey. The purpose of the survey was to measure student perceptions of their experiences at the college. Overall, students expressed high satisfaction with their educational experiences, particularly with the quality of the instructional program. (See *Resource Room: SACE Survey*.)
- **Student Transfer:** Transfer data are available through a statewide database that includes all community college and university students enrolled in

public Arizona colleges and universities. In fall 2002, over 9,000 undergraduate students enrolled at an Arizona university had transferred credits from MCC; almost 8,000 of these undergraduates attended Arizona State University. In that same year, over 1,500 of new transfer students to an Arizona university had transferred credits from MCC. Perhaps most importantly, over 2,500 former MCC students received undergraduate degrees from an Arizona state university in 2002-2003. (*See Resource Room: Focus on Effectiveness and Student Transfer Data.*)

- Student Awards and Recognitions: MCC student recognitions are many, but one of the most recent stands out among the others. Two MCC students were included on the *USA Today's* 2004 All-USA Two-Year College Academic Team's first team of 20. These two community college students were selected from the 1,528 associate's degree candidates nominated from across the country. A third MCC student was named on the All-USA second team.

CLASSROOM AND COURSE LEVEL ASSESSMENT

MCC's attention to defining and assessing student learning outcomes at the institutional and program level has resulted in greater attention to assessing student learning at the classroom and course levels. Course objectives written as end-of-course competencies for every course in the Maricopa District are defined through the curriculum development process. Classroom objectives include these course objectives but in most cases include additional objectives deemed important by the faculty member teaching the course. Approximately 90% of both residential and adjunct faculty responding to the faculty survey agreed or strongly agreed that they regularly review and update their course learning objectives. Individual faculty members are responsible for assessing student achievement of both class and course-level objectives and use a wide range of assessment methods to do so, including performance-based measures, student portfolios, projects, and more traditional paper and pencil examinations.

Faculty within a department may choose to collaborate on developing and using a common tool to assess student learning at the course level, and a number of MCC departments are currently doing so (e.g., biology, psychology, business, communication, and mathematics). Department chair interviews revealed that several departments are involved in discussions about developing more systematic assessments of course objectives across the course. The Foreign Language Department is investigating assessments to measure student readiness to move from 100- to 200-level language courses. The Philosophy and Religious Studies

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Department is planning to develop a pre- and post-course assessment for students in the World Religions and Introduction to Philosophy courses. The evidence suggests that more and more faculty are transitioning from a teaching-centered to a learning-centered approach. Faculty are beginning independently to develop processes within the disciplines that use course-level student assessment data for curriculum planning, to develop new departmental initiatives, and ultimately to improve student learning. *(See Resource Room: Faculty Survey, Department Chair Interviews, Department Plans.)*

Core Component 3b: Mesa Community College values and supports effective teaching.

Mesa Community College is a learning organization with a long history of valuing and supporting effectiveness and innovation in teaching. While the college's focus has shifted from teaching to learning over the past decade, MCC fully recognizes that the two go hand-in-hand. The college's investment in effective teaching is ubiquitous and evidence of it can be found throughout MCC's documents, programs, facilities and teaching resources. Results from the Student Assessment of the College Environment (SACE) clearly point to a high level of satisfaction with the quality of instruction at MCC. *(See Resource Room: SACE Survey.)* Overall results were consistent in two survey administrations conducted in 2000 and 2003. From a total of 68 items, five showed average ratings above 4 (on a 5-point scale), and all five related to quality instruction:

- Instructors expertise in subjects taught
- Instructors attitude toward students
- Instructors clearly define grading policies
- Opportunities to participate actively in class
- Instructors clearly define course requirements

The Dean and Associate Deans of Instruction provide leadership as well as significant resources for faculty and non-teaching staff to pursue a wide range of options that develop effective teaching. The college has planned, invested in, and implemented strategic directions that foster a spirit of innovation through its faculty, resources, environment, and support services. Not surprisingly, 84% of MCC's employees agree or strongly agree that the college supports innovation in teaching and learning. *(See Resource Room: Employee Survey.)* This section documents and provides evidence of the myriad ways that MCC encourages, supports, and promotes effective teaching.

FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of faculty professional development at MCC is to expand the faculty member's knowledge and experiences, to enrich the curriculum for students, and to build skills that lead to enhanced instruction. The ultimate goal is to better facilitate student learning. Faculty and staff can avail themselves of numerous professional development opportunities provided both through the college and the Maricopa District. (*See Resource Room: Faculty Professional Development.*) Selected examples of professional development opportunities include the following:

Faculty Professional Development: Faculty can apply for funding designated specifically to support attendance at professional conferences, workshops and seminars related directly to their discipline or to the scholarship of teaching and learning. Two-thirds of the faculty responding to the Faculty Survey reported they had attended a professional conference in the past two years, and 59% reported they are members of professional associations.

Study Abroad: MCC faculty can participate in both district and college-sponsored travel and study abroad opportunities through partnerships with institutions of higher education around the world including The Netherlands, Ireland, China, Mexico, Australia, and the United Arab Emirates. Study trips may be one week or several months in duration, depending upon the purpose and venue. There is a formal process for faculty to propose new travel and study abroad programs. As a result of many of these opportunities, faculty members returning to the college from abroad infuse international content into the curriculum, share international perspectives with colleagues, and implement new instructional approaches gleaned from their experiences. (*See Resource Room: International Education Department.*)

The Salzburg Seminar: In summer 2004, five MCC faculty members participated in the first Salzburg Seminar, an international study program designed specifically for community college faculty. Included in the seminar were topics such as making internationalization an institutional priority and education for sustainable development. A dialogue day was held the following fall in which these faculty shared their learning with interested colleagues.

Faculty Mentoring: Many MCC academic departments support new faculty through formal and informal faculty mentoring. By pairing new and veteran faculty members, both have opportunities to learn from each other professionally, develop collegial relationships, and become more engaged in the academic life of the college and the discipline.

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

The Chair Academy for Leadership and Development: MCC is home to this international professional development organization, and many MCC faculty and staff have the opportunity to participate in both the Annual Conferences and in the Leadership Academies. The academies are offered in local, national, and international locations and include two week-long sessions offered over a two-year period. Participants discuss current topics of importance in higher education, develop leadership skills, and network with educators from around the world.

Kaleidoscope Project: The purpose of Kaleidoscope is to provide MCC faculty with time to reinvent, rediscover and reorganize ideas relating to the courses they currently teach. Participants also have the opportunity to share information regarding the teaching and learning process with colleagues. Faculty members apply to participate in Kaleidoscope through a proposal process; those who are accepted (through a peer review process) are released from a total of nine hours of teaching over two semesters. Approximately 15 MCC faculty participate each academic year.

Innovative Projects: Faculty and staff can write proposals to apply for MCC funds designated on an annual basis for innovative projects that might not otherwise have a funding source. Many of these projects support teaching innovations such as the following: Exploring and Learning Teaching Methods of Physics, Virtual Outcrop (internet-based interactive field geology exercises), and Teaching with MAPLE (utilizing dynamic software to enhance the Calculus curriculum).

Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI): Mesa's faculty also avail themselves of the many district programs and funding opportunities designed to improve their teaching and student learning. For example, the MCLI, the Maricopa District's faculty development office, sponsors the Maricopa Institute for Learning (MIL), a year-long fellowship program to encourage the scholarship of teaching and learning. Since 1999, 34 faculty members across the District have been selected as MIL scholars, and 11 of these are from MCC. Several MCC faculty members also have received MIL Learning Grants to enhance their teaching through the MCLI.

CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

One of the major avenues for teaching support and professional development at MCC is the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). (*See Resource Room: Center for Teaching and Learning.*) Throughout the interviews conducted in preparation for the self study, faculty and staff referred to the CTL as one of the college's most valuable assets. In many ways, the CTL

epitomizes the innovative spirit for which MCC is recognized. Established in 1991, the first CTL was staffed by a part-time director and small support staff and located in a small space where faculty congregated to talk about, and experiment with, new teaching innovations. Today, the CTL is housed in a large, newly renovated space that includes training and meeting facilities as well as two experimental classrooms at the Southern and Dobson campus. In fall 2004, the CTL established a formal presence at the Red Mountain campus with permanent dedicated space adjacent to faculty offices.

The CTL is staffed by seven full-time employees: faculty director, faculty instructional technologist, multi-media developer, staff developer, two systems programmers, and an office coordinator. In addition, the staff includes several part-time employees including a faculty development coordinator, graphic artist, web developer, and faculty mentor for distance learning. Dr. Paul Elsner, Chancellor Emeritus of the Maricopa District, also has an office in the CTL. Dr. Elsner, with his knowledge of and commitment to the community college mission, is an extraordinary resource for faculty and staff. Also, he has been a driving force in the growth of the college's international program.

The CTL is a comprehensive professional development center and learning laboratory devoted to encouraging and supporting effective teaching as well as providing development opportunities for all employees. The Center provides over two dozen faculty and staff workshops each semester, hosts innovation showcases and faculty dialogues, brings in external expertise in innovative pedagogies and learning theory, and supports instructional and course development. In addition, a faculty member participating in the active retirement program is housed in the CTL and coordinates the Distance Learning Mentoring Group, which provides a support system for faculty wishing to develop distance learning courses and instructional approaches.

One example of an important CTL program designed specifically to encourage and support effective teaching is the New Faculty Experience (NFE), a year-long professional development program for new full-time faculty. Through the New Faculty Experience, new faculty members participate in a once-monthly series of seminars designed to build collegiality, develop scholarship, and acculturate them to the academic life of the college. The program includes discussion of important college topics such as student outcomes assessment, faculty governance and faculty evaluations, professional development opportunities, curriculum development, technology and distance learning. A similar, though less

Through the New Faculty Experience, new faculty members participate in a once-monthly series of seminars designed to build collegiality, develop scholarship, and acculturate them to the academic life of the college.

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

intensive, faculty orientation program is available for adjunct faculty through the Colloquy for Adjunct Faculty Experience (CAFÉ).

Survey results show that faculty and staff use the services provided by the CTL and are satisfied with them. Virtually all survey respondents said they had participated in a CTL workshop, activity, or consultation within the past two years. Eighty-six percent of residential faculty and 94% of adjunct faculty report they are satisfied or very satisfied with the Center for Teaching and Learning. (*See Resource Room: Faculty Survey.*)

FACULTY EVALUATION AND RECOGNITION

Within the Maricopa District, “residential” faculty refers to full-time, permanent, board approved faculty members. Residential faculty members are evaluated according to the Faculty Evaluation Plan (FEP) for Instructional Improvement which is defined in the Residential Faculty Policies (RFP). (*See Resource Room: RFP, FEP, MCC Procedures for Faculty Evaluation.*) The stated goals of the FEP are to concentrate on improved performance and to acknowledge both effective teaching and service beyond the classroom.

Residential faculty are on probationary status for the first five years and during those years are required to complete an annual FEP and collect student course evaluations. For the first two years, the department chair and associate dean each conduct classroom observations and hold follow-up evaluation meetings with the faculty member. Appointive faculty complete an FEP every three years. Evaluation procedures for one-year-only and one-semester-only faculty and adjunct faculty are determined at the college level and involve classroom observations by the department chair or designee, student course evaluations, and post-evaluation meetings with the department chair or designee. Faculty evaluations are designed to ensure quality instruction, to foster professional development and to continuously improve the learning experience. However, when asked if the FEP contributes to their growth as a faculty member, only 44% of residential faculty agreed. During interviews, four department chairs stated they believe that the formal FEP process is in need of modification. Changes to the FEP would involve policy revisions through the District meet and confer process.

Although not required to administer student evaluations every semester in every course, faculty survey results show that 94% of residential and 97% of adjunct faculty regularly use student feedback and course evaluations to improve their teaching. MCC students, through the ASMCC student government, have requested more regular and systematic student evaluations of faculty. (*See Resource Room: Student Issues Forum Results.*)

The college has numerous processes to recognize effective teaching, including faculty of the year awards in which faculty are recognized for a variety of professional accomplishments at the end-of-the-year brunch. The President's Communiqué regularly includes a section announcing and acknowledging recent faculty achievements and awards, as does the college newsletter, *The Bulletin*. In fall 2004, the Faculty Senate initiated the Distinguished Faculty Award, which recognizes faculty members for exemplary teaching as well as outstanding service to the college, community and profession. MCC faculty members have received numerous national honors and recognitions for teaching excellence. (*See Resource Room: Faculty Recognitions.*)

FACULTY ROLE IN THE CURRICULUM

The assumption underlying curriculum development processes at MCC is that curriculum is the responsibility of the faculty, and all curriculum proposals originate from faculty in the specific discipline. Curriculum development is conducted within a well-defined process that combines internal MCC processes and procedures with those of the Maricopa District. The ten Maricopa Colleges share a common course bank from which to draw. At MCC three people have roles to assist as facilitators for curriculum development: a faculty curriculum development expert, a faculty representative to the District Curriculum Committee, and a curriculum technician who help guide faculty through the development and approval process.

A faculty member intending to develop a new or modify an existing course or program can consult with the faculty curriculum developer and curriculum technician for process help throughout the development stage. Once the faculty member has completed his or her course or program proposal, it is reviewed at the department level. The proposal is then sent to a district-wide Instructional Council (IC), which is composed of a faculty representative from each college in the Maricopa District for each discipline or prefix. Instructional Council members serve as a content review board. Thus, faculty members within the discipline throughout the District have input and evaluation rights on the content of the course or program. IC representatives typically send a proposal to their departments at their own colleges for input and suggestions. Finally, the IC makes a recommendation to approve or disapprove the course or program.

If the IC approves the course or program, the proposal is then sent to the Mesa College Curriculum Committee, which is chaired by the Dean of Instruction. Other committee members are faculty "cluster representatives" of the MCC department chairs and non-voting members representing such support areas as the library and academic advisement. The College Curriculum Committee reviews both the content and the administration of the

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

course or program, such as faculty loading hours and credits. If the course or program is approved by the MCC Curriculum Committee, it is then sent to the District Curriculum Committee where each of the ten colleges has two voting members, the Dean of Instruction and the faculty representative. Once a proposal is approved, it is placed on the MCCCCD Governing Board agenda for final approval and implementation.

Thus, curriculum content is reviewed at a number of levels and by a number of committees, each with considerable faculty representation. While the process may be cumbersome, it does ensure that the faculty has a strong voice in curriculum decisions. Faculty roles and responsibilities in developing new programs and curriculum appear to be well understood at MCC as reflected in the faculty survey results: 85% of residential and 75% of adjunct faculty agree or strongly agree that faculty have the appropriate level of responsibility for developing the curriculum.

Curriculum and articulation processes at MCC are highly participatory with many levels of review for quality of content and design. MCC faculty benefit from resources and support for their curriculum development and maintenance. Along with wide participation, however, comes a challenge to communicate a great deal of highly detailed information to many relevant individuals and committees. This is an ongoing challenge at both the college and district levels. For example, MCC has experienced some delay and frustration with career and technical program proposals that are reviewed by a district-wide council. In some cases, communication that ought to have occurred among colleges was channeled through the District Office, which complicated and slowed down conversation about the merits of proposals and bogged down the approval process to the detriment of faculty and, ultimately, students.

District-wide involvement in college curriculum also creates a situation in which colleges do not have complete control over their own curriculum. Even though the colleges are accredited and held accountable for their curriculum as individual entities, they must negotiate their curriculum with bodies that represent all ten colleges. For example, the District Curriculum Committee itself acts as a sort of senate that gives equal influence to all ten colleges, regardless of size. Occasionally, this means that a few small colleges that do not have the capacity to offer certain programs can block the creation of those programs for colleges that are capable of offering them. This also means that colleges are privy to each other's ideas and initiatives and can create programs that compete with each other for student enrollment. Inevitably, these conditions sometimes politicize the curriculum process.

Another disadvantage of having so many levels of approval for curricular proposals is the amount of time required for a proposal to be placed on at least four meeting agendas. The Instructional Councils and curriculum committees do not meet during the summer when many faculty are away, so a proposal begun in late spring will not be approved until, perhaps, mid-fall. This becomes a problem for faculty in high-tech areas that require constant updating.

There is also the occasional lapse of careful review by the District Curriculum Committee. Until a few years ago, the committee reviewed and acted on each curriculum proposal individually. This enabled committee members to take a careful look at each proposal and to discuss and resolve issues and concerns as they arose. However, the committee now operates by consent agenda, which requires vigilance to ensure that every curriculum proposal approved meets the high standards of MCCCCD curriculum. For example, some colleges will bring forward proposals that Instructional Councils have disapproved; in some cases, the District Curriculum Committee members have not spotted these on the consent agenda, and curriculum has passed against the wishes of the faculty who are charged with overseeing it.

In the area of articulating courses for transfer to local Arizona universities, past MCCCCD leadership has tied the District's general education program to Arizona State University's program. While this benefits many of MCC's students who transfer to ASU, it also diminishes the ability of the faculty district wide to determine what the general education program will look like. Currently, ASU is undergoing dramatic changes to their general education program, and those changes will have a significant ripple effect on the District and the curriculum.

Given this context, MCC's faculty demonstrate a deep commitment to keeping the curriculum current and responsive to student and community needs. Last year, for example, MCC faculty processed well over 300 curriculum and general education proposals. Supported by administrators who honor faculty ownership of curriculum and provide support services through the Curriculum Office, MCC faculty maintain a dynamic and up-to-date body of curriculum.

FACULTY CREDENTIALS AND QUALIFICATIONS

MCC faculty members are highly credentialed as evidenced by the following data presented in Table 5-3:

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Table 5-3

HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED BY MCC FULL-TIME AND ADJUNCT FACULTY FALL 2004		
Degree	Full-Time Faculty (n=324)	Adjunct Faculty (n=832)
Doctoral Degree	24%	12%
Master's Degree	68%	63%
Bachelor's Degree	5%	16%
Associate's Degree/Some College	3%	8%

The faculty hiring process follows district established guidelines and policies that define minimum qualifications in terms of academic credentials. (*See Resource Room: Human Resources Data.*) Candidates applying for faculty positions in academic teaching fields are required to have the following from an accredited college or university:

- A master's degree in the teaching field, or
- A master's degree in any teaching field with 24 upper division and/or graduate hours in the teaching field, or
- A master's degree in any teaching field with 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching field and
- EDU 250, Overview of the Community Colleges, or equivalent must be completed within two years of the date of hire.

Candidates applying for faculty positions in occupational teaching fields are required to have the following from an accredited college or university:

- The same qualifications as those listed for academic teaching fields, or
- A bachelor's degree plus 3 years work experience in field to be taught, or
- An associate's degree or 64 semester hours and five years work experience, or five years work experience in field to be taught, and
- EDU 250, Overview of the Community Colleges, or equivalent must be completed within two years of the date of hire.

Additional qualifications are often established within a discipline or department. In addition, MCC has defined the essential functions of a faculty member's role which are published for all faculty job postings and include the following: instruct students and assess student learning; maintain office hours and interact with students outside of class; review, revise, and develop curriculum; engage in the academic life of the college by participating in

department, college and/or district committees and activities; pursue professional development to advance knowledge within the discipline and promote the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Students perceive MCC faculty to be highly qualified. According to the SACE, students rank instructors expertise in subjects taught very highly with a mean of 4.25 on a 5-point scale. Overall, student satisfaction with instructional services was very high at 3.93 with a number of items ranking at 4.0 or higher. Such items include the student perception of instructor's attitude toward students, clear definition of grading policies, opportunities for active participation in class, clearly defined course requirements, up-to-date technology in coursework, use of a variety of teaching strategies, and overall quality of instruction at MCC.

The wealth of evidence presented in this section points to the college's value of and support for effective teaching. A spirit of teaching innovation underlies academic life, and faculty have strong support from the administration to develop and provide high quality programs.

Core Component 3c: Mesa Community College creates effective learning environments.

MCC's vision statement directly addresses learning environments and states: *Mesa Community College will be a leader among community colleges, providing an innovative and intellectual learning-centered environment that is responsive, adaptable, and inclusive.* This statement attests to the college's commitment to innovation and to providing the most effective learning environment possible.

Mesa Community College's learning environments allow and enable the effective teaching and learning discussed earlier in this chapter to flourish. The college learning environments foster the development of the whole person – intellectually, socially, and culturally – and they promote active engagement among students, faculty and staff. Most of MCC's students are balancing the competing obligations of school, work and family, and two-thirds of the students attend part-time. Thus, the college also consciously works to create an environment where students feel a part of college life. In this section, learning environments are addressed within a conceptual framework that includes the following assumptions:

- Environments support teaching and learning;
- Environments enrich campus life and culture;
- Environments foster inclusiveness and diversity;
- Environments are enhanced by current technology;

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

- Environments are continuously evaluated and improved.

ENVIRONMENTS SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING

This category includes the physical spaces that support students' intellectual growth: classrooms, laboratories, outdoor teaching spaces, and "soft" spaces where students gather informally to study and socialize. It also includes programs that help develop intellectual growth such as the Honor's Program, service learning, internships, and academic clubs and organizations.

Physical environment is the focus of one of the 12 college strategic goals and states, "Provide a safe, secure, and aesthetically pleasing environment for working, teaching, and learning." The physical learning environment includes classroom spaces, support facilities, common areas, and the grounds, all of which impact teaching and learning. Evidence gathered indicates that the overall quality of the physical environment on the MCC campuses is good.

Most of the classes on the MCC campuses are held in standard classrooms and the class size is generally small and intimate; average class size in fall 2004 was 23. The quality of MCC's classrooms was rated quite high by students surveyed. The newer Red Mountain campus was rated higher, with a mean score of 4.24; understandably, students at the older Southern and Dobson campus rated the quality of classrooms somewhat lower, with a mean score of 3.84.

Facilities master planning is discussed in detail in Chapter 4 and demonstrates how MCC's plans for facilities are driven by academic programs, services, and student life. In addition, through the annual department planning process, departments develop programmatic initiatives that might involve additions, enhancements, or renovations of existing instructional facilities. One focus of departmental and college planning in the past several years has been to create more "soft spaces" for students to gather and interact. Another is the development of the concept of academic "clusters." These are groups representing multiple disciplines that share curricular commonalities and that represent educational or career pathways for students. The purpose of the clusters is to create opportunities for student and faculty interaction as well as to maximize resources through sharing of facilities and services. The seven clusters are: Communication and Humanities; Social, Cultural and Behavioral Sciences; Visual and Performing Arts; Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; Health and Wellness; Business Systems; and Academic Services.

The cluster concept provides a framework for the modernization of instructional spaces at the Southern and Dobson campus and for the development of the Red Mountain campus.

For example, the Math-Science cluster at Southern and Dobson includes a newly renovated Mathematics building, the new Life Science building, and the Physical Science/Engineering building, all located in close proximity in one area of the campus. These disciplines share services and an outdoor courtyard. The Life Science building exemplifies how building design can be driven by pedagogies and learning principles and provides a model for future development of science labs and classrooms college-wide. (*See Resource Room: Life Science Building Brochure.*) Outside the building, an extensive xeriscape garden environment serves as a teaching space for many life science classes.

A number of other outdoor areas throughout both campuses are designed to enhance the teaching and learning experience. A Desert Walk at Red Mountain is lined with native desert plants and creates a learning opportunity as students and faculty walk between the older and newer parts of the campus. Sculpture and artwork are prominently exhibited throughout the campuses, and an outdoor amphitheatre provides a gathering and performance space.

A variety of programs beyond the traditional curriculum also create a rich teaching and learning environment. The Honors Program is designed for students who meet designated academic standards to pursue intensive studies, participate in service learning, and take advantage of stimulating extra-curricular activities such as the Honors Lecture Series. Honors students can take advantage of a number of special scholarships and fee awards. (*See Resource Room: Honors Program.*) The Center for Service Learning provides service learning opportunities for students through both in-course and independent modules. Virtually every department within the college offers some in-course service learning opportunities. (A detailed discussion of Service Learning and evidence related to its effectiveness are presented in Chapter 7.) Internships are used extensively in career and technical programs and provide students with real world work experience where they apply classroom theory and learning. Academic clubs such as Phi Theta Kappa, the national honor society for community college students, engage students in many learning experiences beyond the standard curriculum.

ENVIRONMENTS ENRICH CAMPUS LIFE AND CULTURE

Learning does not occur only within the classroom, and student life and development at MCC are enhanced significantly by the many student services provided. At a “commuter” campus such as MCC, providing comprehensive student support services and programs is critical to student success at the college and beyond. In addressing the development

At a “commuter” campus such as MCC, providing comprehensive student support services and programs is often critical to student success at the college and beyond.

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

of the whole person, this section focuses on key examples of those aspects of the college that address students' social and cultural development.

The *Admissions Office* provides information to prospective students, processes applications, determines residency for tuition, evaluates transcripts, and assists students through the enrollment process. At the Red Mountain campus, all enrollment services (admissions, testing, advisement, registration, and financial aid) are combined into a one-stop center where students work with a single Student Services Specialist.

Student recruitment is coordinated through the Admissions Office and involves a wide range of recruitment activities for students from the many high schools located in the college service area. Recently, the recruitment staff coordinated “Thunder Days” which brought over 300 high school students to the campuses for a day to acquaint them with the diversity of available programs and services.

The *Office of Records and Registration* coordinates the registration process, provides enrollment verification, maintains official college transcripts for all students, and records transfer credits on official transcripts. Other services include establishing student athletic eligibility and implementing probation and suspension policies.

The *Student Financial Services* office provides financial assistance to all students who apply and qualify. Financial assistance is awarded on the basis of financial need, except where funds are specified for recognition of special talents and achievements. The office also disperses the many scholarship funds awarded.

The *Transfer Services Office* provides individual advisement and academic planning for students wishing to transfer to four-year institutions. The office houses a wealth of resource materials, hosts visiting admissions and advisement staff from numerous universities, and acts as liaison for students to facilitate the transfer process.

The *Advisement Center* provides academic advisement to assist students in developing educational plans to complete their academic goals. Program specific advisement is also available for some programs such as Fire Science, Nursing, Education, and Technology.

The *Counseling Department* offers services to help students address personal, social, educational, and career concerns. Students may seek out counseling services on their own or be referred by a faculty or staff member. The Student Opportunities for Success series

provides workshops developed to help students to be successful in college and covers topics such as test taking strategies, time management, and learning styles.

Career Services and Re-Entry Services offer a variety of resources that assist re-entering students in adjusting to college life and assist students seeking employment or making career decisions. They provide career guidance, help with preparing resumes, labor market information, job fairs, and internship opportunities.

Intercollegiate *Athletics* are an integral part of student life at MCC, which is a member of the Arizona Community College Athletic Conference and the National Junior College Athletic Association. Student athletes conform to all relevant eligibility rules. The men's program includes basketball, cross country, football, soccer, baseball, golf, tennis, and track/field. The women's program includes basketball, cross country, soccer, volleyball, golf, softball, tennis, and track/field. (See *Appendix: Basic Institutional Data Forms.*)

Student Life and Leadership enhances the total student collegiate experience through a wide range of programs and events. Under this umbrella is Student Government, the Associated Students of MCC (ASMCC), which serves as the student voice of the college and advocates for student concerns. Student representatives serve on college committees, participate in leadership development activities, and sponsor a variety of student activities including community service.

Student clubs and organizations are an important component of the total college experience and student learning at MCC. Students can participate in 38 different clubs and organizations designed to provide personal satisfaction, promote volunteerism, and enhance social growth. Opportunities are as varied as the Environmental Action Club, Inter-tribal Student Organization, the Philosophy Club, and the Web Club.

Numerous *performing arts* programs allow students to pursue a wide range of interests in theatre, dance and music outside the classroom. Any MCC student is eligible to audition for a variety of dramatic and musical productions, as performers, working behind the scenes, or attending performances. Some of the performing groups include the A Cappella Choir, Jazz Band, Stagedoor Players, and Ballroom Show Dance Club. Other cultural activities in the fine and visual arts include annual events such as the Student Art Show and Faculty Art Show, the International Film Festival, World Language Day, creative writing competitions, and readings by well known literary figures.

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

The *Bookstore* and *Food Services* are privately owned enterprises serving MCC students. Students can purchase textbooks and supplies at bookstores at both campuses. Food services include traditional cafeteria style eating as well as two coffee bars – one, the Jazzland Cyber Café, provides easy internet access and casual gathering space.

Students are strongly encouraged to pursue experiences beyond the classroom and can choose from a wide array of such opportunities. Collectively, these many services and programs are intended to create a comfortable campus environment and a collegiate atmosphere that support student learning and development.

The services are evaluated within the various departments which track numbers of students served; some areas gather feedback from students to identify areas for improvement. The Red Mountain One-Stop Student Services Center collects feedback directly from students accessing services through a just-in-time online feedback form. Staff receive responses as they are submitted and are able to make changes to services as soon as a pattern of need is identified. The graduate survey asks students applying for graduation to report which services they accessed during their time at MCC and how satisfied they were with the services. The SACE, a random sample student survey administered by the Office of Research and Planning in 2000 and 2003, includes a section on student services and provides college-wide student satisfaction data about the services. For both administrations, the student services area was rated lower than other areas assessed in the SACE, with mean ratings of 3.36 in 2000 and 3.43 in 2003. Though slight, the increase in ratings between years was statistically significant, reflecting an improvement in student satisfaction with services.

These survey results are corroborated by comments from students during discussion groups in which they have cited concerns about finances, advising, and other support issues. Specific departments such as advising and financial aid, have made changes specifically to address SACE results. Collectively, a wide range of student feedback assists the college in making planning decisions. (*See Resource Room: SACE Survey.*)

ENVIRONMENTS FOSTER INCLUSIVENESS AND DIVERSITY

The MCC value of inclusiveness speaks to the college's commitment to create learning environments that promote and respond to matters of diversity. This environment is manifested through programs and services, but also through the attitudes and perspectives that infuse the college community. Data from interviews and discussion groups conducted for the self study provide an indicator of how faculty, administrators and staff throughout the college view diversity. In essence, diversity is perceived as broader than race, ethnicity,

gender, age, disability and lifestyle – it is also about the diversity of thoughts and ideas. As stated by one interviewee, “The faculty is diverse ethnically and in their ideologies, philosophies, and areas of expertise.” (See *Resource Room: Interviews and Discussion Results*.) Students appear to be aware of this orientation as shown in the SACE results; the mean rating for the item “the college encourages the free exchange of thoughts and ideas” was 3.75. Employee responses to the same item resulted in a mean rating of 3.6.

Inclusiveness of ideas is necessary but not sufficient, and numerous programs and services are designed to address the rich diversity of ethnicity, gender, age, disability, and lifestyle in the college community. The college is keenly aware that students must be prepared to live and succeed in a diverse world, to understand differing points of view, and to appreciate the perspectives of the global community. Thus, diversity is recognized and addressed in the college strategic plan, the curriculum, the student assessment program, the hiring process, professional development opportunities, and through a number of specialized programs and services. Some of the most relevant examples are included in this section.

Both the *Office of Multicultural Services* and the *American Indian Center* provide support services for underrepresented, ethnic minority, and English-as-a-Second-Language students. Services include assistance in accessing college resources, educational and career planning, and transfer. The office hosts annual student leadership retreats and numerous student activities throughout the year. The American Indian staff has an established network with American Indian tribes throughout the state and makes regular recruitment visits to the reservations. As a result, MCC has the most American Indian students of any community college in Maricopa County, currently over 800 students.

One of the most unique examples of how MCC fosters inclusiveness and diversity is the recent creation of the Center for Global Tolerance and Engagement by the Philosophy and Religious Studies Department. The Center’s mission is “To help foster a sustainable environment for global tolerance and engagement in our pluralistic world and to promote understanding of different world views on religion and ethics.” In fall 2004, the center sponsored over 10 discussions and colloquia on topics such as religious issues, the Patriot Act, Republican/Democrat Leaders Debate, and U.S. involvement in the United Nations. Events are open to all MCC students and employees.

Mesa Community College values inclusiveness of people and ideas.

We respect the dignity of each individual, expressed through fairness and just treatment for all. We value individual diversity and recognize the unique contributions of all individuals.

We promote open communication and the free exchange of thoughts and ideas.

- from MCC’s Values

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Over 4,000 (15%) of MCC's students are Hispanic and, by far, the largest of the minority groups at the college. The Hispanic population in the service area surrounding the Southern and Dobson campus is growing rapidly, and almost 3,700 of these 4,000 students attend at that campus. The college has developed a number of programs and services to respond to this growing population. Most recently, in fall 2004, was the creation of the ESL Student Services Center which provides admissions, registration, advisement, and outreach services for non-English speaking students. The center also assists students in accessing financial aid and ESL testing services. The majority of the population seeking services is Spanish speaking.

The *International Education Office* mission is to foster global understanding by providing support services and programming that enhance the international efforts of MCC. The IE Office offers services for international students and scholars, works with study abroad programs, provides cross-cultural training, and serves as a resource for campus international /intercultural initiatives. Through this office, MCC's international students can access specialized advisement, assistance with immigration and visa issues, and other support services. In fall 2004, 270 international students with F1 student visas were enrolled at the college.

A number of departments at the college exist specifically for the purpose of addressing, and providing services to meet, the unique needs of special student populations. The Office of Disability Resources provides a wide range of services to appropriately accommodate students with disabilities or handicaps. These include scribes, note takers, interpreters, specialized adaptive equipment, special testing arrangements, and guidance through the registration and advisement processes. The Adaptive Lab located in the library provides ADA compliant computers for information access including screen magnification, voice recognition, and Braille conversion software. Bringing all college facilities into full compliance with ADA regulations has been a college priority and significant resources have been expended to ensure such compliance.

MCC has a full service *Children's Center* at the Southern and Dobson campus that provides child care for children (ages three through 12) of students and employees. The Center has a contract with the Arizona Department of Economic Security for students eligible for child care subsidy, is licensed by the Arizona Department of Health Services and is accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. It has earned additional accreditation by voluntarily undergoing an extensive internal self study and an external review by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. In fall 2004, a survey of students and employees was conducted at the Red Mountain campus to assess the need for child care

services there. Results showed that there is a sufficient need to establish a center at that campus, and these results are being used to plan such a center for the next building phase.

The *Community Education Center* is responsible for non-credit course offerings and meets the needs of a number of special community populations. For example, students can enroll in General Education Development (GED) preparation classes to prepare for the GED test. Community Education also provides a wide array of senior adult programs that offer intellectual and cultural stimulation. Among these is “New Frontiers for Learning in Retirement,” a membership organization for seniors sponsored by MCC that facilitates classes, study groups, and lectures.

SACE survey data provide evidence of student perceptions of the college’s attention to diversity and inclusiveness. The survey section titled Social and Cultural Services includes questions about the college’s sensitivity toward ethnicity, age, gender, physical challenges, religion, and learning styles. This section received an overall mean rating of 3.84, second only to the Instructional Services mean rating of 3.93. On the Community Leaders survey, 92% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that MCC meets the needs of diverse constituents; 80% of employees surveyed made this rating on the same item. Nonetheless, keeping pace with the needs and expectations of the diverse constituents that make up the MCC community, particularly those of the growing Spanish-speaking community, will be an ongoing challenge.

Perhaps the most compelling source of evidence that the college values diversity is seen in the student outcomes assessment program. Cultural diversity is one of the stated outcomes of a general education. This outcome is assessed using an assessment tool that was adapted from the Diverse Democracy Project at the University of Michigan which addresses student attitudes, perspectives and behaviors. Results from this assessment show that students completing their general education studies at MCC have significantly higher scores than students beginning their studies on a number of diversity-related items, for example:

- Tolerance of others with different beliefs
- Tolerance for differences in sexual orientation
- Interest in taking classes that emphasize the contributions of different cultures
- Belief that conflicting perspectives are healthy in a democracy
- Willingness to challenge others on racially or sexually derogatory comments
- Making efforts to get to know individuals from diverse backgrounds

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

ENVIRONMENTS ARE ENHANCED BY CURRENT LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

One of the 12 college strategic goals states, “Use technology to ensure access to current knowledge, foster human connections, and enhance learning.” Learning technologies are vital to the college’s academic life and to the learning environments experienced by students. Students and faculty alike seem to have insatiable appetites for technology, both as a subject and as a tool for learning. Historically, many MCC faculty members have been “early adopters,” testing the boundaries of new learning technologies as they emerge.

Technology’s role in the learning environment is apparent not only through the thousands of computers available for student and faculty access, but also through college systems developed to support them. A few examples of how technology is used to support learning are the WebCT course management system, the MyMCC Portal which enables faculty members and students to communicate via college email about instructional content and questions, and online academic advising. The Teaching Learning Technology Roundtable (TLTR) has been in place since 1997 and provides a forum for participating faculty and staff to discuss how technology can be used most effectively to support student learning. In the late 1990’s TLTR engaged in a series of activities that resulted in a technology strategic plan which was incorporated into the college strategic plan.

The CTL provides numerous opportunities for faculty to share emerging instructional technologies and pedagogy. For example, a Faculty Showcase in 2003 provided sessions on topics such as using Geographic Information Systems technology, streaming media, and web-based simulations. The CTL also provides experimental classrooms that are available for faculty who would like to conduct classes using innovative teaching and learning applications. These classrooms have provided faculty an opportunity to become more involved in the planning, decision-making, and designing of classrooms that encourage learning and enhance teaching.

The Center continues to investigate and research new approaches and technologies for teaching and learning. Most recently, it has joined the open source movement by coordinating MCC’s membership with the Sakai Educational Partnership Program, a collaboration of colleges and universities across the country. Its staff are involved in research and experimentation of solutions in Uportal, Open Source Portfolio Initiative, and SAKAI, an open source course management system being developed by MIT, the University of Michigan, Indiana University and Stanford University.

Data have been cited previously indicating that a large majority (85%) of the faculty feel that innovation is supported at the college. Additional survey results show their level of satisfaction with various aspects of learning technologies and support, as shown in Table 5-4 below. Interestingly, adjunct faculty responses show they are considerably more satisfied than residential faculty with all six items. The reasons underlying this disparity would be an important question for further examination.

Table 5-4

MCC FACULTY SURVEY RESULTS SATISFACTION WITH LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AND SUPPORT SPRING 2004		
Satisfaction with:	Percent Saying Satisfied or Very Satisfied	
	Full-Time Faculty	Adjunct Faculty
* MyMCC Portal	77%	90%
* computer hardware and software resources	68%	73%
* online information and services	67%	83%
* technology support services (Help Desk)	63%	73%
* computer labs	61%	69%
* technical support for technologies I use in the classroom	58%	78%

Results from faculty discussion groups held as part of the self study data collection effort reinforce these findings. In discussions about teaching and learning, faculty addressed the challenges of effectively incorporating technology while still remaining true to academic excellence. Example discussion comments about challenges related to instructional technology include discrepancies in the level of technological knowledge and skills among students, issues with responsible student use of the Internet for instructional purposes, and ensuring equitable student access to technology. (*See Resource Room: Faculty Discussion Group Results.*)

Another source of data related to learning technologies is the Student Computer Use Survey which was conducted among students in fall 2000 and again in spring 2003. (*See Resource Room: Computer Use Surveys.*) Results provide useful information about student access to and usage of technology, important elements of the learning environment. They also indicate a considerable increase in both student access and use over the three-year period. Selected results are illustrated in Table 5-5:

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Table 5-5

MCC STUDENT COMPUTER USE SURVEY RESULTS COMPARISONS FROM 2000 AND 2003		
Item	2000	2003
I have access to a computer at home.	85%	94%
I use a computer on the MCC campus.	59%	70%
I use the Internet for research often or on a daily basis.	42%	58%

In July 2005, after more than three years of planning and preparation, the Maricopa District will “go live” with the new PeopleSoft student information system. This system will replace the legacy student information system that has been in place for over 20 years. The new system is intended to enable students to take more responsibility for planning and tracking their educational goals and progress, provide timely electronic access to student information such as grades and records, allow students to self-advise, and streamline many student services processes such as financial aid and fee payment.

Distance Learning

MCC offers a wide range of classes via the Internet, providing an alternative learning environment that increases access and learning options for students. Distance learning at MCC was first initiated by a small group of faculty in the late 1990’s who were interested in using the Internet and other technologies as tools to create different learning options for students. In fall 1998, 665 students were enrolled in Internet classes; by fall 2004 that number had grown to 3,210 students who were enrolled in 259 sections and 121 different courses. The majority of courses offered are part of the general education curriculum, although a number of career and technical courses are also available.

Internet students have the following demographic characteristics: 61% are female; 74% are white, non-Hispanic; and 67% intend to transfer to another college or university. Sixty-six percent of the students taking Internet-based classes at MCC are also enrolled in one or more classes at another location, most at the Southern and Dobson campus. (*See Resource Room: MCC Course Schedule.*)

Students taking Internet courses have a full complement of services accessible online including orientations, admissions, registration, advisement, and tuition and fee payment. An online student survey asking students to rate and comment upon the quality and accessibility of these services provides immediate feedback for improvement. Technical assistance is available through several online help pages; in addition, students may obtain

personal help on a walk-in basis during regularly scheduled hours through the Distance Learning Office. The college Technology Support Services office provides helpdesk assistance accessible by phone or email. Distance Learning students are also supported through remote access to reference services, online catalogs, library databases and other electronic resources.

In spring 2004 and again in fall 2004, a program evaluation survey was administered to all students enrolled in distance learning courses. The spring survey was conducted near the end of the semester and therefore captured the students who were most successful in completing a distance learning class. The fall survey was administered in the fifth week of the semester and therefore may have captured a more inclusive group of students. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate the program as a whole, not individual courses or instructors. (*See Resource Room: Distance Learning Survey, Spring 2004 and Fall 2004.*) Some highlights from the surveys are shown in Table 5-6.

Table 5-6

MCC DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS SPRING 2004 AND FALL 2004		
Item	Percent Saying Agree or Strongly Agree	
	Spring 2004 (n=545)	Fall 2004 (n=760)
I received sufficient information on how to get started in online courses.	75%	71%
I received sufficient information regarding the technological requirements for taking online courses.	80%	76%
I received adequate support and help related to technology issues for online courses.	67%	63%
I would recommend online courses at MCC to other students.	75%	75%
	Percent Saying Satisfied or Very Satisfied	
How would you rate your overall experience with online courses at MCC?	79%	75%

The findings from the survey indicate a relatively high level of satisfaction with the distance learning program. Students surveyed in spring were slightly more positive than students surveyed in fall, but this difference may be due to the time of semester when the survey was administered.

Typical of colleges and universities across the country, MCC has had some challenges keeping pace with the demand for distance learning courses and with establishing all of the policies and practices needed to support them. One basic issue has been reaching agreement about the degree of standardization across courses, a frequent topic of discussion within the

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Distance Learning Committee, a Faculty Senate committee. In response, the committee has developed a number of documents related to distance learning, such as guidelines for the necessary components of a distance learning course. Faculty wishing to develop a new distance learning course also may apply for a grant through the Distance Learning Coordinator's office. The first semester of funding allows faculty to receive reassigned time for course development; the second semester, the faculty member pilot tests the course with a maximum of 10 students. This allows the faculty member to implement, evaluate, and revise the course based on a small target population. (*See Resource Room: Distance Learning.*)

The CTL provides instructional development and technical support for faculty developing online courses. In addition, a Distance Learning Mentoring Group (DLMG) was established to support faculty who develop online courses. The DLMG is led by a faculty mentor with expertise in online course development who assists faculty with instructional design and pedagogy issues. This mentor position currently is filled by a faculty member participating in the active retirement program who has received numerous national recognition awards for her online biology courses. She conducts weekly seminars and demonstrations, provides individual consultation, and works closely with the college's Distance Learning Coordinator and Committee.

Issues such as section size, faculty load, and office hours are other topics currently under consideration by the faculty and the administration. The Dean of Instruction held a strategic conversation for faculty and instructional staff in spring 2004 to gather ideas for establishing such practices. Results from that conversation have been incorporated into planning and decision making on a number of distance learning issues. (*See Resource Room: Distance Learning Strategic Conversation Results.*)

ENVIRONMENTS ARE CONTINUOUSLY EVALUATED AND IMPROVED

MCC regularly uses a wide range of assessment and evaluation methods to examine college learning environments. These methods include formal surveys of students, employees and community members; interviews, discussion groups and strategic conversations; direct and indirect measures of student learning; and tracking of service usage and participation in programs. In addition, regular data reports about student enrollment trends, enrollment patterns by site, class size, faculty loading, and space utilization are continuously examined to inform planning and decision making. These assessment and evaluation data are used by college administrators, faculty, department chairs, directors and managers to determine what practices, services and programs are effective and how they can be improved.

Over the past decade, the use of outcomes assessment and evaluation methods and resulting data has been widely adopted throughout the instructional areas of the college. Through the self-study process, it became apparent that some MCC non-instructional units might benefit from conducting more targeted evaluations that provide specific feedback about how a service or program is perceived or could be improved. For example, student satisfaction with the availability of a service, or with its quality, or with the facilities and equipment provided, could be monitored. Development of systematic methods for all MCC departments to evaluate their services would build upon the strong foundation of data-driven planning that has been established.

Core Component 3d: Mesa Community College's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

Imperative to the viability of a learning-centered organization are the many resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning. These are vital to the quality of life for students, faculty, staff, and the community served. This section describes, and provides evidence about the effectiveness of, MCC's key learning resources: the library, the learning enhancement center, the writing center, science laboratories and other labs designed to support learning, clinical and internship sites, and technology support including support for distance learning. Also discussed is the allocation of equipment, staff and other financial support for those learning resources.

THE LIBRARY

The new Paul A. Elsner Library is the academic heart of the institution. Upon passage of the 1994 bond election, the top priority for the building campaign for the Southern and Dobson campus was the new library. The Elsner Library, which opened in the summer of 1999, includes collaborative work spaces including computer pinwheels, study tables and study rooms, and consultative spaces for faculty to meet with students one-on-one, or for students to meet in small groups or with class-sized groups. Two large meeting rooms have helped alleviate the college's crunch for meeting space and the Southwest Reading Room accommodates numerous meetings and scholarly activities. In 2001, the Red Mountain Library began operation. The goal of the libraries is the provision of services and resources that support the college curriculum and fulfill the information needs of users. Full library services are available at both the Southern and Dobson and Red Mountain campuses and selected services are available at Extended Campus locations. The primary users of library facilities and services are MCC students, faculty and staff, however they are also available to any member of the community.

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Technology developments have had a profound impact upon library mission, programs and services and on what students and other users expect from a library. The Elsner Library houses over 350 computers, and another 71 are available at the Red Mountain Library. Through the MCC library catalog, patrons have access to the catalogs of all 10 Maricopa Colleges as well as the major university and city libraries in the state. Electronic resources provided include an online catalog with complete patron services, electronic books, online reference services, reference and periodical databases, online aids to research and Internet search engines and directories. Traditional library services such as access services, acquisition services, and reference services as well as academic computer assistance services are also available at both libraries. An “Email A Librarian” Service is operated by MCC librarians and allows patrons to seek library information or reference assistance via email.

Librarians are faculty members and are responsible for all regular library functions, as well as library instruction. Instruction is provided to individual classes as scheduled with subject faculty, through one-on-one contact with students, and as a part of the Library Information Technician Program. The Elsner Library is open seven days a week, with hours until midnight Monday through Thursday. Hours are slightly modified at the Red Mountain Library.

The main focus of the collection of some 77,000 print titles, as well as a wealth of electronic resources, is to support the college curriculum and student learning. The annual library budget has been doubled since the opening of the new library, allowing significant updating of the collection, periodicals, and database subscriptions. A regular annual computer replacement plan ensures that computers are as up-to-date as possible. Additional data about the library is provided in Appendix C, Basic Institutional Data Forms. (*See Resource Room: Library.*)

SACE survey results show that students at both campuses are quite satisfied with the quality of the library. Red Mountain students had a mean rating of 3.88 and Southern and Dobson students had a mean rating of 4.01. This difference is not unexpected considering the larger size and comprehensiveness of the Southern and Dobson facility.

LEARNING ENHANCEMENT CENTER

The Learning Enhancement Center (LEC) provides free tutoring in most subjects through one-on-one tutoring, group tutoring with professional and peer tutors, study skill workshops, and study groups. Tutoring is available by appointment or on a drop-in basis at several locations: Elsner Library, Math/Science Learning Center, Music Building, Physical

Science Building, Academic Skills Center and the Red Mountain campus. Online tutoring services are available for distance learning students for some courses. Since hiring a full-time faculty director for the LEC in 2001, tutoring services have been expanded significantly. Tutoring is available for more subject areas, at more locations, and for longer hours.

TutorTrac software allows the LEC to collect data and generate reports about student usage, number, frequency and purpose of tutoring visits. These records show that, between fall 2002 and fall 2003, there was a 21% increase in the number of student visits (from 9,267 to 11,190) to all tutoring locations combined. At the Red Mountain campus, visits increased 43% during that time period. (*See Resource Room: LEC End-of-Semester Reports.*)

In academic year 2003-04, the LEC evaluated its services through a student survey. The survey was developed by the director with technical assistance from the MCC research staff. Results showed a high level of satisfaction with services and with student perceptions of how tutoring positively affected their academic performance. Examples of results include the following:

- 89% agreed or strongly agreed that their course grades improved as a result of tutoring.
- 85% agreed or strongly agreed that they are more likely to stay in college as a result of tutoring.
- 96% reported that their tutor knew the subject matter most of the time or always.

Results also allowed the LEC director to identify areas to be targeted for improvement, such as the variety of subjects offered and the hours tutoring is available. (*See Resource Room: LEC Survey.*)

The Academic Skills Center is designed specifically to address the needs of students enrolled in below-100 level courses in Reading, English, and English-as-a-Second-Language. Students can access individual tutoring, study space, and supplemental computer-based instruction in the lab. The purpose of the lab is to assist students who are academically underprepared to be successful in meeting their higher education goals. During the first eight weeks of the fall 2004 semester, the center, staffed by six adjunct faculty and a student worker, provided 1,809 hours of service to students. In addition to tutoring, students are able to acquire academic survival strategies in such areas as study assistance, test-taking, and writing.

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center is coordinated by the English Department and is an excellent source of help for English students as well as students in all other disciplines. It is staffed with professional English tutors who assist with writing problems such as structuring papers, writing essays and research papers, and writing mechanics. In addition to individual sessions, several Independent Study English 100 courses are offered in the Writing Center to help students with grammar and writing deficiencies. The Writing Center is located adjacent to the Learning Enhancement Center on the first floor of the Elsner Library.

LABORATORIES

The college maintains a variety of well-equipped laboratories that are used in numerous subjects including biology, chemistry, geology, physics and more. The technology/agriculture department provides laboratory space for programs as diverse as electronics, manufacturing, drafting, welding, veterinary technician, and horticulture. The Design, Family, and Consumer Science Department has design, food, and child development laboratories. Other programs that are particularly dependent upon up-to-date laboratory equipment include fire science, nursing, mortuary science and business programs and courses such as computer information systems and computer programming. The MCC Network Academy is home to a growing number of information technology programs that prepare students for high technology careers such as Network Administration, Information Assurance, Fiber Optics, and Database Technology. These programs are extremely technology intensive, both in terms of equipment requirements and faculty expertise.

Many of the liberal studies disciplines require laboratory space and equipment, and many departments provide computer labs to supplement and support student learning. These include, among others, labs that support instruction in foreign languages, graphic arts, biotechnology, ceramics, studio recording, psychology, geography, and theatre.

The new Life Science building which opened in 1999 is an excellent example of how programs, curricula, and pedagogy can drive facilities; in this case specifically, the design of the science labs. Several principles drove the design including attention to creating a learner-centered and collaborative environment, which gave rise to the development of flexible work benches in the center of the room and sinks and equipment at the perimeter.

The capital-intensive nature of supporting such a comprehensive array of programs requires a well organized and regular planning process. Labs also require technical support, usually

provided by lab technicians. Department planning at MCC drives the priorities for decisions about the resource allocations necessary to ensure programs are adequately supported. Through their annual three-year plans, departments communicate the initiatives most important to them and the resources necessary to support those initiatives. Often, review of plans reveal programmatic commonalities that enable resource sharing or leveraging. Many programs have also developed partnerships with external entities that result in mutually beneficial resource sharing. For example, plans for a new degree program in dental assisting and dental hygiene include a partnership with the Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health. Through this partnership, MCC students will be able to complete the clinical aspects of their training at the dental school facilities located in close proximity to MCC's Red Mountain campus. Similarly, the Fire Science program has benefited from significant donations from local fire departments which donate fire fighting equipment needed to support instruction.

SUMMARY

In summary, the effectiveness and excellence of teaching and learning at Mesa Community College are highly valued among members of the college community. It is paramount that students who come to and leave the institution, regardless of background, culture, and experience, are successful learners and have access to quality faculty, student services, curricula and programs, learning resources and environments, and numerous opportunities to fulfill their educational goals. Students are afforded a variety of learning experiences, such as service learning and civic engagement, global and international education, student leadership and organizational activities, as well as multiple ways and modalities of instruction. Planning, assessment, instructional innovation, and student service are deeply vested in the culture and operation of the institution.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Mesa Community College is proud of its student assessment program and views it as a major strength of the organization. MCC has been able to document positive student learning results over a number of years. Student outcomes assessment is comprehensive and integrated into the academic life and culture of the college. The college community has moved beyond implementation of the assessment process to the meaningful use of assessment results to improve student learning.

Evidence from all facets of the institution indicates highly motivated, talented, and innovative faculty and staff. The administration provides significant resources and support to

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

foster a spirit of innovation. The faculty demonstrates depth of knowledge in their disciplines and mastery of pedagogy in their teaching. This excellence is recognized by students who consistently report high satisfaction with the quality of their instructors and the instructional program.

Students at Mesa Community College have the benefit of a complete collegiate experience that includes a wealth of academic and student development resources. Students can avail themselves of rich learning and leadership opportunities outside the classroom through countless co- and extra-curricular activities.

While assessment and evaluation processes have permeated the college's instructional programs, evaluation processes in non-instructional areas are not as systematic or fully developed. The college can build upon its established expertise in assessing and evaluating instructional programs by encouraging and supporting evaluation efforts in non-instructional areas wishing to collect reliable and systematic effectiveness data.

In developing a second comprehensive campus, new programs, and additional course sites, the college has relied heavily upon adjunct faculty. While adjunct faculty members bring much expertise and richness to the classroom, the college is challenged to increase the number of full-time residential faculty who fully participate in curriculum development and the academic life of the college.

The curriculum and program development process, which is driven by and carried out through district-wide policies and procedures, is viewed by many at MCC as inordinately cumbersome and time-consuming. The development cycle is prolonged by bureaucratic processes and political agendas. The college is challenged to influence this system in a positive way so that new courses and programs that meet the needs of students and community can be developed in a more expeditious manner and timeframe.

Chapter 6

Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge

- Supporting and Modeling a Life of Learning
- Acquisition of Knowledge and Intellectual Inquiry
- Curricula for a Global, Diverse and Technological Society
- Using Knowledge Responsibly



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Criterion 4: Mesa Community College promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

INTRODUCTION

The vision, mission, values, and strategic goals of Mesa Community College all speak directly to the college's commitment to promote a life of learning, not just for students but also for employees and members of the college community. This commitment is realized in the college's rich and diverse curriculum, in the explicit learning outcome statements for general education and career and technical programs that are reflected in the curriculum, and through the co-curricular opportunities that directly support those learning outcomes. A life of learning is fostered and modeled throughout the organization, evidenced in part by the college's significant commitment to and investment in professional development. While primarily a teaching institution, the college also actively encourages and supports research and scholarship, particularly the scholarship of teaching and learning.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and present the evidence demonstrating how Mesa Community College fulfills Criterion Four by:

- Fostering and modeling a life of learning;
- Providing a rich and diverse curriculum and related co-curriculum;
- Supporting professional development, research, and scholarship;
- Ensuring the usefulness and currency of the curriculum; and
- Ensuring the responsible use of knowledge and technology.

Core Component 4a: Mesa Community College demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

Continual learning is emphasized in both the Maricopa Community Colleges mission statement and in the MCC mission documents. Members of the MCCCCD Governing Board model their commitment to a life of learning by participating in professional organizations and engaging in professional development. Mesa Community College is a learning organization committed to innovation and to staying abreast of current research and trends in higher education. Evidence is cited throughout this section to demonstrate how MCC values and promotes life-long learning and the discovery and pursuit of new knowledge.

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

PLANNING AND BUDGETING TO PROMOTE CONTINUOUS LEARNING

MCC's planning process and pattern of financial allocation demonstrate that the emphasis on learning stated in the vision, mission, and values guide the actions of the institution. The fact that 70% percent of the college budget is allocated for instruction and instructional support is one measure of the college's commitment to learning for students. In addition, the strategic goals for 2004-2007 demonstrate that planning for continuous learning is a priority. While all the strategic goals support learning, one goal in particular – employee professional development – focuses specifically on a life of learning. It states, "Expand opportunities for the professional development of all employees." (*See Resource Room: Strategic Plan 2004-2007.*) A few specific objectives related to this goal illustrate the many ways MCC cultivates a life of learning across the college and among all learners:

- Raise awareness of, and support for, the value of professional development throughout the college.
- Support personal and professional renewal activities for all employee groups.
- Expand and enhance the college new employee orientation program.

Recently documented accomplishments related to the employee professional development goal provide evidence that the college adheres to its strategic plan. Examples of college accomplishments cited in recent strategic plans include:

- Enhanced and began full implementation of the New Employee Orientation Program.
- Implemented the Colloquia for Adjunct Faculty Experiences (CAFÉ) program.
- Established a Center for Teaching and Learning presence and services at the Red Mountain campus.
- Improved the quality of student advising through formal advisor training with weekly update sessions.
- MCC faculty presented papers and conducted workshops at numerous professional conferences.

The college's commitment to the acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge can be seen in the Fund 1 operating budget that shows significant investments in the Center for Teaching and Learning and other programs that support a life of learning. As another example, professional growth fund expenditures, which are available for and used by all

employee groups, increased 67% over a five-year period, as shown in Table 6-1. (*See Resource Room: Fund 1 Operating Budget.*)

Table 6-1

MCC PROFESSIONAL GROWTH EXPENDITURE COMPARISON FISCAL YEAR 1998-1999 AND FISCAL YEAR 2003-2004		
Employee Group	Amount Spent	
	FY 98/99	FY 03/04
Full-time faculty	\$54,189	\$87,159
Adjunct faculty	\$7,348	\$12,466
Maint & Operations	\$1,452	\$3,416
Safety	\$335	\$1,140
Crafts	\$4,035	\$21,482
Professional Staff	\$8,981	\$1,902
Mgmt, Admin, Tech	\$12,269	\$20,186
Total	\$88,609	\$147,751

Note: Includes payment for cost of workshops, conferences and seminars; does not include tuition reimbursements.

Both district and college financial resources are available for professional growth, renewal and leadership development opportunities for every employee group including support for professional training, conference travel and registration.

Each employee group has specified policies and procedures for applying for professional growth funds; applications are reviewed and approved by a committee of peers. These policies and procedures are stated in the employee group manuals. (*See Resource Room: Employee Policy Manuals.*) For example, the Professional Staff Association policy manual states the following: “The goal of the Professional Staff Development Committee is to provide an incentive which will encourage the employee to maximize his/her scope of knowledge. Tuition assistance may be given to eligible employees taking upper-division courses at accredited colleges or universities. Employees may also have costs reimbursed for attending job-related or career-oriented seminars, workshops, or other activities as approved by the supervisor and the Professional Staff Development Committee following the determined guidelines. The Professional Staff Development Committee promotes district-wide employee development by sponsoring group seminars, workshops, and other activities.”

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

The college and the District also demonstrate a financial commitment to professional development and continuous learning through various grant opportunities including grants available through the Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction programs, MCC's Educational Development Program, and MCC's Innovative Projects. Funding for these programs has increased regularly. In total, more than 40 development opportunities are open to employees of the Maricopa Community Colleges (*See Resource Room: MCCD Employee Resource Guide and Employee Professional Development.*) Moreover, Governing Board policies ensure that employees can participate in such activities without loss of compensation. (*See Resource Room: PSA Policy Manual.*)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The fact that MCC values, fosters and models a life of learning by providing and encouraging professional growth, renewal and skill-building opportunities for employees is widely recognized. The employee survey revealed that 84% of employees believe that they have "adequate opportunities to continue professional development." (*See Resource Room: Faculty and Non-faculty Employee Surveys.*) Results also show the types of activities respondents participated in over the past two years as illustrated in Table 6-2 below.

Table 6-2

MCC FACULTY SURVEY RESULTS RESPONSES TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ITEMS SPRING 2004			
	Percent Saying Agree or Strongly Agree		
	Residential Faculty	Adjunct Faculty	Administrators and Staff
Participated in some form of professional growth activity.	52%	23%	44%
Participated in district-sponsored workshops.	63%	32%	70%
Participated in college-sponsored professional development activities.	38%	16%	39%
Took courses to stay current in their field or discipline.	45%	38%	32%

MCC faculty members play a central role in the academic life of the college. Hence, the college provides a multitude of professional development opportunities to ensure faculty are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to foster intellectual growth and continual learning. Many of these were discussed in detail in Chapter 5 and all attest to the commitment MCC has to fostering a life of learning. A vast majority of faculty (97%) report that they address "being a life-long learner" with students in their classes. (*See Resource Room: Faculty Survey.*)

Adjunct faculty, who are such a critical part of the quality instructional program, have access to both district and college funding for professional development. For example, the MCCCCD Adjunct Faculty Professional Growth Program offers funding to part-time faculty to attend professional conferences, and MCC's Colloquia for Adjunct Faculty Experiences provides funds for part-time faculty to participate in many development opportunities at the college.

Countless examples demonstrate the ways MCC faculty avail themselves of professional development opportunities. They attend and present at professional conferences, hold memberships in professional organizations, participate in college and district-sponsored programs, and complete sabbaticals. Faculty members are also encouraged to complete advanced degrees in their field and receive tuition reimbursement for related coursework. They are further rewarded for advanced degree study through guaranteed salary advancement. (*See Resource Room: Faculty Salary Schedules.*) Employees in the PSA group also receive tuition reimbursement for taking upper division coursework and have salary advancement for attaining degrees. These efforts are encouraged and supported by college and district leadership.

The MCCCCD tuition waiver policy allows all employees and their dependents to take courses tuition-free at any college in the District. Therefore, many employees take advantage of community college courses to build upon their existing personal and professional knowledge base or learn more about their subject area or a new field of interest.

MODELING A LIFE OF LEARNING

The importance of and value for learning is modeled throughout the college. Members of the MCC community engage in a variety of educational and civic activities that contribute to and model an atmosphere of intellectualism, social responsibility and appreciation for the arts. Hundreds of students, faculty, staff and community members attend lectures by noted speakers such as those sponsored by the Honors Program, the CTL, the Center for Global Tolerance and Engagement, academic departments, and the college. For example, in the months leading up to the 2004 elections, several leading national figures made presentations and held follow-up discussions at MCC. These included Democratic primary candidate Howard Dean who presented his positions; Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. who discussed environmental issues; Senator John McCain who spoke about the war in Iraq; and President Bush who recognized the critical role of community colleges. Students and faculty engaged in forums and discussions about key local, state, and national election issues, and faculty-moderated discussions were held following each of the presidential debates. These events

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

created an environment that was attuned to social, political and economic issues at the local, state, national and international level – in essence, an environment that values learning.

Numerous department-sponsored events, such as the annual Literary and Film Festivals, foster and model a life of learning. Members representing all the employee groups at the college work together collaboratively to develop activities such as the college Wellness Lecture Series. MCC employees donate generously to the annual United Way campaign, participate in campus blood drives, and raise funds for charity events. Many employees are actively involved in community foundations, boards of directors for community-based organizations, and neighborhood associations.

Mesa Community College offers opportunities for all individuals to continually learn new skills, challenge themselves intellectually, pursue creative outlets, and enhance their personal and professional development. It is also evident that numerous employees take advantage of these opportunities, thus demonstrating a personal commitment to fostering and modeling a life of learning.

FREEDOM OF INQUIRY

High standards, integrity, and academic freedom are central to the college's educational tradition. Faculty policies clearly assert a faculty member's right to academic freedom related to content and method of presentation in the classroom, appropriate textbooks, and determination of student grades. (*See Resource Room: Residential Faculty Policies.*) Also, MCC's promotion of the ethical use of knowledge is evident in many of the college's stated expectations for employees and students. Pertinent publications describe, for example, copyright regulations and academic standards policies for students and intellectual property rights for faculty and staff. (*See Resource Room: The Blue Book: All-MCCD Employee Manual, and MCC College Catalog.*)

SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH

Another important way that the college demonstrates that it values continual learning is the promotion of scholarly pursuits and research. Numerous faculty members are engaged in research related to their academic disciplines or the scholarship of teaching and learning. Results from the faculty survey showed the following examples of research currently being conducted by MCC faculty:

-
- Cultural impacts of landscape evolution
 - Behavioral neuroendocrinology
 - Remote microscopy research with ASU
 - Solar UV-B and plant physiology
 - Export trade issues experienced by export companies
 - Traffic volumes
 - Analysis and mapping of an ancient ritual structure
 - Distance learning and writing instruction
 - Alternate teaching approaches and use of technology in teaching non-majors
 - Information literacy competence; experimental study
 - Pilot test of new version of the SAT for the College Board

MCC faculty members, administrators, and staff also contribute to scholarly activities in their disciplines or fields by presenting at leading national conferences, applying for and participating in funded grants, serving on editorial boards, publishing in professional journals, and writing books. (*See Resource Room: Faculty Survey and Non-faculty Employee Survey.*) Currently, MCC faculty and administrators are participating in several grants funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), including the following:

- An archaeology faculty member is a lead participant in a large, multi-year national project to renew the undergraduate archaeology curriculum.
- An engineering faculty member is the principal investigator for the “Computer Science, Engineering, and Mathematics Scholarship” program which recruits academically talented but financially disadvantaged students into high technology disciplines.
- The Dean of Instruction and a chemistry faculty member are PI and co-PI for an NSF-funded conversation entitled, “What it Means to be Educated in the 21st Century.” Through this funding, in spring 2005, the college will host a discussion among nationally renowned panelists representing education, business, and government.

These are only a few examples of the breadth of research activity at MCC. Consistent with being primarily a teaching institution, faculty members are under contract to teach a 15-hour load each semester. However, they may receive reassigned time or reduced course loads to conduct research if such is written into a research grant or project. Because the college has

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

become more cognizant of the value of scholarly work, the development of more formalized systems for recognizing and rewarding faculty and staff for research pursuits is an important topic for future examination.

The college supports and recognizes the value of the continual learning and professional networking realized through professional conferences and workshops. Over the past two years, 66% of full-time faculty had attended a professional conference, indicating a significant level of support for this form of professional growth. (*See Resource Room: Faculty Survey.*) Sabbaticals, determined and supported by the District, are another important aspect of professional growth for faculty, providing the time, resources, and opportunity to engage in intensive scholarly pursuits related to their academic discipline or to teaching and learning. While there has been increased funding for sabbaticals over the years, they remain highly competitive; the number of sabbaticals awarded each year district wide is dependent upon the funds allocated for expenditure, the number of applications, and the duration of the sabbaticals. In the past four academic years, 15 MCC faculty have participated in sabbaticals. Members of the Management, Administration and Technology (MAT) employee group may also apply for sabbaticals. Because sabbaticals are not a practical alternative for the majority of employees, MCC provides a broad range of professional development and training opportunities.

The Kaleidoscope Project, supported by the college, provides faculty with reassigned course loads to develop and work on self-defined academic projects. More than 20 faculty have participated in the past two years, and 14% of residential faculty responding to the survey said they had participated in Kaleidoscope at one time in their careers. Educational Development Project (EDP) grants provide summer funding for faculty to develop additional teaching materials for courses; Innovative Projects grants (\$100,000 in college funding per year) provide an opportunity for all employee groups to develop creative programs that benefit the college and students. Proposals are reviewed by the presidents of the employee groups, and funded projects are managed through the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The CTL provides numerous and varied development opportunities that focus on building new skills or developing academic projects through the use of technology, applying new pedagogies, and pursuing the scholarship of teaching and learning. District grants provide faculty the funding to complete discipline-specific scholarly projects related directly to courses. The District also offers workshops, seminars, and dialogue days on a regular basis that focus on technology, leadership and organizational skills, and teaching pedagogy. In addition, the District's Office of Employee and Organizational Development offers training year-round which is available free of charge to all employees.

This office includes Technology Training Services which is responsible for providing training and development opportunities district wide for employees to upgrade their technology skills. (*See Resource Room: Employee and Organizational Development Year End Report 2002-03.*)

The Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI), a district-wide academic support entity, sponsors the Maricopa Institute for Learning (MIL), a fellowship for residential faculty in any discipline interested in examining significant issues in their teaching fields and contributing to the scholarship of teaching and learning. A secondary purpose of MIL is to create a community of scholars that will engage in conversations about the scholarship of teaching and learning. Eleven of the 34 MIL fellowships granted since 1999 were made to MCC faculty members. As a follow-up to the MIL experience, Teaching Circles is an MCC initiative coordinated through the Center for Teaching and Learning that engages these 11 scholars in discussions about the scholarship of teaching and learning.

The Maricopa District is a charter member of the League for Innovation, an international consortium that promotes innovation in community colleges. MCC administrators and faculty members regularly attend and present at League conferences, contributing to the advancement of innovation and the use of technology to support teaching and learning. Faculty and administrators are frequently invited to be speakers, presenters, and panel members at national meetings and conferences. MCC is also home to The Chair Academy, a national organization; the mission of the Academy is to “design and implement leading edge training programs and services to advance organizational leadership.” Through The Chair Academy, MCC faculty and staff can participate in conferences and academies to develop and apply organizational development and leadership skills.

Effective teaching and learning require an understanding of scholarship within a discipline; therefore, the application of scholarship is an essential feature of teaching at MCC. Regardless of the subject matter, faculty members rely upon current research and scholarship to inform the curriculum and ensure the integrity of the educational experience. Professors and students jointly engage in critical exploration of the existing body of knowledge within a field in each lecture, lab experiment, group project, or performance.

RECOGNIZING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

MCC publicly recognizes the educational successes of students and the learning accomplishments and academic achievements of faculty and staff. Student achievements are acknowledged through a number of annual college events, for example:

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

- Graduation Ceremony
- Academic Honors and Awards Banquet
- Academic Distinction Reception
- Associated Students of MCC Banquet
- Student Art Show
- Red Mountain Student Success Showcase
- All-Arizona Academic Awards Banquet

Academic accomplishments among students are also recognized with scholarship awards, department certificates, induction ceremonies, and press releases to local media. And academic excellence recognitions are given by the various college honors societies (e.g., Psi Beta, Phi Theta Kappa) and the MCC Honors Program. *The Legend* student newspaper provides an outlet to recognize and share student achievements for a variety of curricular and extra-curricular accomplishments.

Each May, the college publicly recognizes the awarding of degrees at a formal graduation ceremony when hundreds of students, family members, faculty and administrators attend to honor the graduates. The value placed on higher education is evident in that the entire administrative team, all residential faculty members and many adjunct faculty participate in the ceremony. Several special events recognize students graduating from particular programs; for example, EMT students, Mortuary Science students and Nursing students attend program specific ceremonies.

MCC has a standing Employee Recognition Committee that “works with employee groups to establish/implement procedures for the recognition of employees.” (See *Resource Room: Committee Membership Handbook*.) Service Excellence Awards for each employee group are awarded and showcased at one of the annual college-wide brunches. Employees are also recognized for a variety of scholarly, innovative, or service accomplishments in the President’s Communiqué, a regular electronic informational communication to faculty and staff. College publications, like *SnapShot* and *The Bulletin*, highlight employee successes, and faculty accomplishments are recognized in a variety of ways such as faculty showcases held at the completion of Kaleidoscope Projects and sabbaticals. The annual Faculty Art Show exhibits the fine arts productions of the faculty. The recently created Faculty Senate Distinguished Faculty Award acknowledges exemplary faculty members, not only for effective teaching but also for participation in scholarship, leadership and civic engagement. Collectively, these recognition opportunities demonstrate the college’s commitment to valuing individuals’ professional achievements, contributions and continual learning.

Recognizing the accomplishments of students, faculty, and staff not only brings acclaim and enhances the reputation of the college, it also provides formal documentation of the level of scholarship taking place at the college. Creating even more systematic and structured ways to recognize the scholarly accomplishments of students and employees in the greater community would further model the college's commitment to scholarship, research and a life of learning.

Core Component 4b: Mesa Community College demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

MCC students attend college for a variety of reasons: to complete coursework that can be transferred to a four-year college or university, to gain career and technical training, to acquire basic skills, or to expand their personal knowledge. Regardless of student intent, MCC is committed to providing educational experiences that cultivate the breadth of knowledge, skills and attitudes commonly associated with higher education. These skills and attitudes are embedded throughout the educational experience: in general education curriculum requirements and related course readings, assignments and experiences; in college-wide student learning outcomes and workplace skills; and in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and learning opportunities.

Mesa Community College has a broad mission – in essence, to provide a comprehensive array of educational opportunities ultimately leading to an improved quality of life. MCC provides a solid general education designed to prepare students to transfer to other institutions of higher learning, to prepare for the workplace, and to be productive members of society. It also serves as the entry point into higher education for under-prepared students and as a resource for educated persons seeking new knowledge. Thus, MCC offers a full range of academic programs, career and technical programs, and skill building and continuing education classes. This diversity in offerings and programs creates an academic climate that provides a rich and well-rounded collegiate experience for students.

GENERAL EDUCATION

All Mesa Community College degree programs include a general education component that is based upon a Maricopa District statement of philosophy developed and agreed upon by faculty throughout the District. This statement reads, in part: “The general education core of the program of study for an associate degree ... helps students develop a greater understanding of themselves, of their relationship with others, and of the richly diverse

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

world in which they live. The general education experience provides students with opportunities to explore broad areas of commonly held knowledge and prepares them to contribute to society through personal, social, and professional interactions with others. The experience fosters personal development by opening students to new directions, perspectives and processes.” (See *Resource Room: College Catalog*.) The general education philosophy statement drives, and provides the foundation for, the general education curriculum across the District.

The Arizona General Education Core (AGEC) is a statewide 35-credit general education program of study that fulfills lower-division general education degree requirements for students planning to transfer to any Arizona public community college or university. The Maricopa AGEC transfers as a block without loss of credit. There are three types of Maricopa AGECS that correspond to different associate degrees. Designed to articulate with different academic majors, their requirements vary accordingly:

- AGEC-A—corresponds to the Associate in Arts
The AGEC-A is designed to satisfy requirements in many liberal arts majors as well as other majors that articulate with the Associate in Arts (e.g., social sciences, fine arts, humanities).
- AGEC-B—corresponds to the Associate in Business
The AGEC-B is designed to satisfy requirements in business majors that articulate with the Associate in Business.
- AGEC-S—corresponds to the Associate in Science
The AGEC-S is designed to satisfy requirements in majors with more prescriptive mathematics and mathematics-based science requirements. AGEC-S is required for the Associate in Science.

Another transfer degree, the Articulated Transfer Partnership (ATP), is articulated between the Maricopa District and a specific program at a specific university. ATP degrees require 19 credits from the Maricopa General Education Core as well as approved lower division transfer courses specific to the major and determined by the receiving baccalaureate degree-granting institution.

Because the Associate in General Studies (AGS) and the Associate in Applied Science (AAS) are not intended primarily as transfer degrees, they conform to slightly different general education requirements, but all MCC students have opportunities to take coursework in the same general education areas. The AGS, for example, requires 44 to 45 general education

credits selected from courses that satisfy general education requirements. AAS degrees include general education requirements ranging from 22 to 28 credit hours.

Students pursuing their general education requirements can choose from hundreds of courses that satisfy “core” and “awareness” areas. Requirements for the Associate in Arts, Associate in Business, and Associate in Science degrees include courses in the core areas of first year composition, literacy and critical thinking, mathematical studies, humanities and fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, and natural sciences. Also required are six credits taken in two of the three awareness areas: cultural diversity in the United States, and global awareness or historical awareness. Each of these awareness areas is defined in order to delineate the competencies developed in them. Courses within the area of *Cultural Diversity in the United States* promote awareness of and appreciation for cultural diversity within the contemporary U.S. through the study of contributions of women and minority groups and interactions among cultural groups. *Global Awareness* develops an understanding of the values and cultures outside the U.S. and their relationship to the American cultural system (e.g., international relationships and global interdependence). *Historical Awareness* develops knowledge of the past that can be useful in shaping the present and the future as well as historical understanding of cultural differences.

The breadth of MCC’s general education curriculum is evident throughout course schedules where options are as wide ranging as Biological Anthropology, Issues in World Politics, and the Art of Storytelling. Students can choose from 12 foreign languages including Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. (*See Resource Room: College Catalog and Course Schedules.*)

Results from the faculty survey reveal faculty perceptions about the curriculum: (*See Resource Room: Faculty Survey.*)

- 89% agree or strongly agree that curriculum offerings “allow students to develop a breadth of knowledge and skills.”
- 82% of faculty members agree that these offerings “develop the students’ capacity for intellectual inquiry.”

The general education curriculum is comprehensive and offers considerable breadth and depth. However, recent changes in degree requirements have resulted in a shift in how students select their courses. The current curriculum is quite prescriptive within the required core, and students tend to take only the courses that fulfill the required designations (e.g.,

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

global awareness, social and behavioral sciences). Courses that satisfy two or more requirements (a core area and one or more awareness areas) are particularly popular. As a result, this creates a challenge for faculty wishing to develop new courses which may not fall within a required general education designation.

COLLEGE-WIDE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION

As discussed in detail in Chapter 5, MCC has established college-wide general education student learning outcomes that reflect the richness and diversity of the curriculum. Because the student learning outcomes are defined above the course level and are interdisciplinary in nature, they bring a common thread to an entire program of study across courses and semesters. Collectively, these outcomes are more than a collection of skills learned in individual courses; rather they represent the holistic skills, knowledge and attitudes expected of students completing their general education. These outcomes facilitate student acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and foster intellectual inquiry. The statements of general education outcomes follow.

Communication

- Write a clear, well-organized paper using documentation and quantitative tools when appropriate.
- Construct and deliver a clear, well-organized, verbal presentation.
- Interact in a collaborative, synergistic manner within a small group.
- Maintain an interpersonally effective climate within a one-to-one interchange.

Numeracy

- Identify and extract relevant data from given mathematical situations.
- Select known models or develop appropriate models that organize the data into tables or spreadsheets, graphical representations, symbolic/equation format.
- Obtain correct mathematical results and state those results with the qualifiers.
- Use the results.

Problem Solving/Critical Thinking

- Identify a problem or argument.
- Isolate facts related to the problem.
- Differentiate facts from opinions or emotional responses.
- Ascertain the author's conclusion.
- Generate multiple solutions to the problem.
- Predict consequences.
- Use evidence or sound reasoning to justify a position.

Scientific Inquiry

Demonstrate scientific inquiry skills related to:

- Hypothesis: Distinguish between possible and improbable or impossible reasons for a problem.
- Prediction: Distinguish between predictions that are logical or not logical based upon a problem presented.
- Assumption: Recognize justifiable and necessary assumptions based on information presented.
- Interpretation: Weigh evidence and decide if generalizations or conclusions based upon given data are warranted.
- Evaluation: Distinguish between probable and improbable causes, possible and impossible reasons, and effective and ineffective action based on information presented.

Arts and Humanities

- Demonstrate knowledge of human creations.
- Demonstrate an awareness that different contexts and/or world views produce different human creations.
- Demonstrate an understanding and awareness of the impact that a piece (artifact) has on the relationship and perspective of the audience.
- Demonstrate an ability to evaluate human creations.

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

Information Literacy

- Given a problem, define specific information needed to solve the problem or answer the question.
- Locate appropriate and relevant information to match informational needs.
- Identify and use appropriate print and/or electronic information sources.
- Evaluate information for currency, relevancy, and reliability.
- Use information effectively.

Cultural Diversity

- Identify and explain diverse cultural customs, beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles.
- Identify and explain major cultural, historical and geographical issues that shape our perceptions.
- Identify and explain social forces that can effect cultural change.
- Identify biases, assumptions, and prejudices in multicultural interactions.
- Identify ideologies, practices, and contributions that persons of diverse backgrounds bring to our multicultural world.

MCC assesses these general education outcomes on an annual basis through the college-wide assessment program which is described in more detail in Chapter 5. In summary, through the general education curriculum, students are engaged in an ongoing process of intellectual growth that crosses disciplinary lines and transcends specific course content and skills.

CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR LINKAGES

MCC recognizes that co-curricular activities provide numerous learning opportunities beyond formal classroom instruction and that they are vital to students' personal and intellectual development. The college supports internships, field trips, lectures, academic clubs, and other events and activities that support and enhance student learning outcomes. MCC offers learning experiences for students to acquire knowledge and grow intellectually beyond formal classroom instruction through service learning and community service, internships, and numerous public speaking events (e.g., Center for Global Tolerance and Engagement, Psychology Evening Lecture Series, Cultural Science Brown Bag Series, International Education Dialogue Days and Lecture Series). Some funding is available to support students to attend conferences and workshops, typically as part of a student

organization or classroom research activity. For example, psychology students have presented research posters at regional conferences and attended a national meeting of the American Psychological Association where they received the National Outstanding Psi Beta Chapter award. And each year, MCC students participate in the national conference for the Model UN program.

The International Education (IE) Department sponsors a wide range of co-curricular activities such as the international film series, which last year featured Middle Eastern filmmakers. In 2003, they hosted a group of nine students from Dubai Women's University who visited the college; the students presented a panel discussion about women's issues in the Middle East. MCC's students are invited to plan and participate in the "Education Without Borders" conference in Abu Dhabi. IE regularly sponsors Dialog Days designed for students, faculty, and staff to engage in discussions of international cultures and issues. Through IE's Study Abroad programs in China, Mexico, Ireland, Italy, and Spain, MCC students develop global and cultural understanding, skills, and awareness. During the spring and summer 2004, 125 MCC students participated in eight study abroad programs. (*See Resource Room: Co-curricular and Study Abroad opportunities.*)

The Center for Service Learning (CSL) works with faculty to incorporate civic engagement and service learning into the curriculum. Students participate in service learning and community service projects that provide practical experience and develop social responsibility. (The CSL is described in detail in Chapter 7.)

Often faculty and staff serve as club advisors linking learning within the classroom walls to activities throughout campus and community. The linkages to student learning can be seen in the numerous activities hosted by MCC's 38 student clubs ranging from student diversity forums to leadership retreats and university transfer visits. Additionally, faculty members often complement their class session by encouraging students to participate in student life activities and may award credit for attendance and feedback. A recent diversity forum held in fall 2004 hosted three academic classes and over 100 students in a lively lunch discussion. This forum was student run and co-sponsored by the Center for Public Policy. Additionally over 200 students participated in the fall 2004 Into the Streets activity which tied service learning to volunteer assignments in the community for the day. The reflective sessions conducted during this day-long activity produced in depth writings about the students' experiences. This, along with many other events and activities sponsored by Student Life, Multicultural Services, The American Indian Center and Career Re-entry services, give students hands-on experience that enhance classroom instruction. And faculty members

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

have an extensive menu of extra-curricular activities to choose from which link academics to real world issues thus providing a comprehensive and holistic approach to student learning.

MCC's Office of Student Life and Leadership, which is designed to enhance the total student collegiate experience, coordinates 38 active student clubs and organizations representing religious and cultural groups, academic disciplines, professions, honorary societies, and political parties. (*See Resource Room: Student Handbook.*) These organizations complement academic programs through their many activities and contribute significantly to student learning and development.

In addition to student clubs, student government (The Associated Students of Mesa Community College, ASMCC) provides students an opportunity to participate in a democratic student government and shared governance of the college. ASMCC sponsors activities ranging from adopting families for the holidays to AIDS awareness days. Also, students have the opportunity to participate in events such as the great SPEAK OUT, Model UN, and *The Legend* student newspaper. These experiences, which are closely linked to academic areas or departments provide intense linkages to the practical aspects of student learning and add to the successful attainment of students' personal and academic goals.

Overall, the comprehensive nature of programs and events available to students and the numerous ways in which they are linked to learning gives students a multitude of opportunities to gain leadership and teambuilding skills and the ability to apply what they are learning (via hands-on experiences) throughout their college experience. In essence, student learning is the focus of many of the events, programs and activities as evidenced by the comprehensive nature of the programs and the involvement of faculty and staff. Co-curricular activities work in conjunction with academics providing the important linkages to a comprehensive educational experience at Mesa, therefore placing a high priority on personal, social and intellectual growth of the whole student.

Core Component 4c: Mesa Community College assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

MCC's curricular offerings are designed to foster an appreciation for cultural diversity about cultures within the United States, as well as to develop understanding of how global issues and society impact that culture. This is consistent with MCC's mission of "preparing individuals for active citizenship in a diverse global society." The curriculum also focuses on teaching students the skills that will be needed to work in and contribute to an increasingly

technological society. Formal review and evaluation systems are in place to determine the effectiveness of the college curriculum and instruction at the classroom, course, program, and institutional level. These systems enable MCC to determine whether it is accomplishing its mission.

Because the college provides a range of educational opportunities including university transfer and workforce development programs, the college relies on a variety of measures to ensure academic credibility and relevancy. This section focuses on the many ways the college looks to both internal and external audiences to ensure that there is a good fit between the curriculum and the work world and that courses and programs are current.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE

Mesa Community College states in its mission the importance of developing in students the skills necessary to succeed in a changing society. (*See Resource Room: Mission Documents.*) The college recognizes that in order to succeed in a global, diverse, and technological society, students must acquire knowledge necessary for independent learning as well as crucial workplace skills. Specifically, MCC expects students to acquire skills requisite of an educated person as defined by the general education learning outcomes discussed earlier. In addition, MCC has well established workplace outcomes essential to a diverse workforce. These skills were defined by interdisciplinary groups of faculty representing all career and technical programs at the college. They were also validated through an employer survey in which employers were asked to confirm the importance of the skills in the workplace. The workplace skills are as follows:

MCC's Student Learning Outcomes for the Workplace include: ethics, interpersonal skills, critical thinking, organization, teamwork, technology literacy, personal and professional responsibilities.

- **Ethics:** The ability to commit to standards of personal and professional integrity, honesty and fairness.
- **Interpersonal Communication Skills:** The ability to utilize oral, written and listening skills to effectively interact with others.
- **Critical Thinking:** The ability to analyze and evaluate information and utilize a variety of resources in making decisions or solving problems.
- **Organization:** The ability to prioritize, meet deadlines and complete assignments in a timely manner; adapt to a constantly changing workload and environment; and identify realistic goals and inventions for short and long term planning.

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

- **Team Work:** The ability to collaborate with others toward the accomplishment of common goals.
- **Technology Literacy:** The ability to use and understand technologies' value and purpose in the workplace.
- **Personal and Professional Responsibilities:** The ability to assess the range of one's abilities, accept responsibility for setting realistic goals, and implementing a plan for personal and professional well-being.

CURRENCY AND RELEVANCY OF COURSES AND PROGRAMS

General Education

The integrity of the general education program is sustained through continuous cycles of course and program planning, development and evaluation. These processes are learner focused, faculty driven, and supported by staff and administration. MCC faculty members are expected to update their courses and programs (*See Resource Room: Residential Faculty Policies*), and 97% report that they regularly review their courses for relevancy and currency. Ninety percent report they regularly revise their course learning objectives. (*See Resource Room: Faculty Survey.*) Moreover, there are established curriculum procedures for creating, modifying, and deleting courses from the course bank. (*See Resource Room: MCC Curriculum Materials.*)

At the institutional level, results from the college-wide student outcomes assessment program provide regular and systematic documentation about student achievement of MCC's general education outcomes. (Chapter 5 includes a complete discussion of the assessment program.) These results provide clear evidence that students completing their programs of study in general education and career and technical programs consistently outperform students beginning their studies at the college. The assessment results show positive student performance data related specifically to diversity outcomes, information literacy outcomes, and technology literacy skills (among others). Results also provide information about strengths and weaknesses in student performance that can be used by faculty to improve teaching and learning.

In order to formally address the assessment results, the Results Outreach Committee (ROC) was formed as a sub-committee of the Student Outcomes Committee. ROC's mission is to facilitate and support the development of outcomes-based scholarly projects that are based on assessment results. Student learning initiatives are also generated through the department planning process. Both ROC proposals and departmental initiatives are supported by funding sources through the Dean of Instruction.

Other channels also exist for regular curricular and content review of the general education program. For example, Arizona State University (ASU), MCC's primary transfer institution, requires regular review of courses that satisfy general education values. Instructional Councils within the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) conduct these reviews every five years for the common courses that have been agreed upon between the community colleges and universities. Also of interest is the large number of curricular and program changes processed through the MCC curriculum committee each year; for example, during 2003-2004 there were more than 300 curriculum changes. Collectively, these methods provide evidence of a dynamic and up-to-date general education curriculum and ensure that course content is relevant in today's diverse and technological society.

Career and Technical Programs

Program review is an important part of the college's institutional effectiveness agenda. Program reviews are necessary to ensure the health and continuous improvement of a program, and they are used to guide the future of a program. Reviews provide evidence of the extent to which programs meet their intended mission and goals, demonstrate program successes, and identify areas for improvement. At MCC, program reviews of career and technical programs are conducted every four years as a formal process, but advisory council members are actively engaged throughout the year. (*See Resource Room: Program Review Handbook and Program Review Notebooks.*)

The program review process is conducted by a team of faculty members who teach within the program, with input from advisory board members. Staff from the Office of Research and Planning provide technical support and much of the data required to complete the review. The process includes the following phases: developing or revising the program's mission and goals; describing the program in terms of enrollment trends, student profiles, and other relevant data; writing or revising program effectiveness outcomes and program-specific student learning outcomes; developing measurement tools and methods to measure the outcomes; collecting data and analyzing the results; and preparing a report that includes recommendations for the future.

Once the program outcomes are developed, reviews typically involve gathering data such as surveys of current and former students and surveys of employers. Program advisory councils often help develop survey content and provide other advice about program currency and relevance as related to workforce needs. Advisory members also receive copies of the program review reports.

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

Student learning outcome measures are developed to assess student learning at the completion of a program of study. Learning may be assessed through the use of portfolios, capstone projects, juried exhibitions, pre-post written assessments, or other methods appropriate to the outcome. Each program also receives the workplace skills student assessment data for students in their programs who participated in the college-wide workplace skills assessment. Results from the workplace skills have consistently shown that students completing career and technical programs perform significantly better than students beginning programs and, thus, that they are achieving the outcomes necessary to enter the workforce. While complete program reviews are conducted every four years, student learning outcomes are measured on an annual basis. (*See Resource Room: Annual Assessment Reports and Program Reviews.*)

Once completed, program reviews provide important information about the relevancy of coursework, the competency of program completers and/or graduates, and the satisfaction of their employers. Specific examples of how advisory board recommendations, results from program reviews, and student assessment results have been used to shape program directions are cited in Chapter 7.

External Accreditations

Some career and technical programs are accredited by program specific professional accrediting entities, and these external accreditations require compliance with nationally established standards and criteria. Two examples are the Nursing Program and the Mortuary Science Program. Nursing accreditation standards require, for example, instruction and assessment in clinical settings with a 1:10 faculty to student ratio. Specific data including online student evaluations, employer surveys, graduate surveys, and end of program evaluations must be regularly collected and monitored by the department. In order to be licensed as a registered nurse, program graduates must complete the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Examination (NCLEX); 46 MCC Nursing graduates took the exam in 2002-03 and the pass rate was 98%. Graduates from the Mortuary Science program become licensed through the national exam of the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards; their pass rate in 2003-04 was 97%, compared to a national average of 79%. Other programs such as Fire Science, Paramedicine, and Network Administration have similar types of external certification examinations which provide evidence about the preparedness of graduates for entry into the workforce. Several other MCC career and technical programs – Veterinary Technician, Interior Design, and Dental Hygiene/Dental Assisting – are currently applying for external accreditations. Such endorsements demonstrate that college programs are commensurate with national standards and expectations.

Core Component 4d: Mesa Community College provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

Mesa Community College's publicly stated values include excellence, specifically, a commitment to "upholding high academic standards." Inherent in this value is that the college ensures that the attitudes and skills requisite for responsible and ethical use of knowledge are learned by students and modeled by faculty and staff. These are basic to academic integrity and are evidenced in college and district policies, in the curriculum and assessment, and in the practices of scholarship and teaching.

DEVELOPING RESPONSIBLE USE OF KNOWLEDGE

Using knowledge responsibly involves knowing and applying the normative codes and behaviors associated with specific disciplines and professions. MCC has articulated and integrated such norms into the curriculum of many programs of study. For example, students in career and technical programs must learn and apply the professional codes of conduct associated with health care professions, the criminal justice system, mortuary science, information technology, fire science, and the automotive industry. Studies in the academic disciplines require students to become familiar with standards necessary to conduct empirical research. The ubiquitous nature of the Internet as a learning tool requires that students understand how to evaluate electronic sources and how to make ethical and responsible use of those sources.

In order to establish a climate of high academic standards, it is incumbent upon faculty and staff to model responsible use of knowledge through their own actions and behaviors within and outside the classroom. At MCC, these actions and behaviors are supported by policies for students, faculty, and staff such as those publicly stated in the College Catalog, Student Handbook, Residential Faculty Handbook, and Governing Board Policy Manual. (*See Resource Room.*) Examples of some of the key policies that reinforce the responsible use of knowledge include the following:

- Computing Resource Standards which safeguard equipment, networks, data, and software acquired and maintained with public funds;
- Copyright Act Compliance which pertain to copyright laws associated with photocopying and copying of computer software and video material;
- Academic Misconduct Standards which include standards related to cheating and plagiarism; and
- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which affords students rights with respect to their educational records.

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

Each of these standards is backed by processes that ensure adherence to it. For example, instances of academic misconduct are dealt with through a series of actions deemed appropriate by the faculty member, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

PRACTICING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mesa Community College's mission documents also maintain that students, faculty and staff have a civic responsibility to the community – expressed through community involvement and volunteerism. This assertion exemplifies MCC's commitment to another component of acting responsibly, namely through social responsibility.

Social responsibility is defined as “fulfilling the obligations that arise within a social context” (i.e., family, community, national, global). It might be understood most broadly as an awareness of one's community and one's role within it. Hence, MCC offers many academic and student development programs that contribute to the overall social and ethical growth and development of students. Examples of social responsibilities include, but are not limited to, environmentalism, human rights, justice and ethics. In the curricular arena there are a number of courses that specifically address these issues (Philosophy, Environmental Geography, Biology, Sociology, etc.), and study abroad programs provide students with a global perspective. In the co-curricular arena, service learning has been incorporated into many courses. The Model UN program (also a political science course) offers students the opportunity to think globally as they represent countries and learn about complex global issues. The Center for Global Tolerance and Engagement and the Center for Public Policy are focused on educating students about the world and encouraging participation through volunteerism and internship opportunities. The Art Department, through its classes, encourages participation in the Empty Bowls program to help the homeless.

These programs directly support course content as well, reinforcing the relationship between extra-curricular activities and classroom instruction. These programs and services are described in more detail throughout other sections of this report. In short, there is ample evidence that MCC models, practices, and teaches responsible use of knowledge and social responsibility and is committed to upholding high standards for the acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge.

RESPONSIBILITY IN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

In considering ethical conduct in research and instruction, MCC has a number of discipline-specific courses in which ethical research practices are taught as part of the course

content. Examples include the appropriate treatment of cadavers in the Mortuary Science and Nursing programs, the use of human subjects in Psychology Research Methods, and the sensitive treatment of human remains and artifacts in Archaeology classes. Because MCC is not primarily a research institution engaged in basic research, the college does not have explicit policies that address standards and guidelines for conducting empirical research. Rather, this is left to the persons conducting research in the individual disciplines. Since many faculty members are involved in research projects, it may be beneficial to engage the academic community in a conversation about ethical issues related to research and instruction. Furthermore, it may be prudent for the college and/or the District to establish formalized guidelines and policies for conducting research.

SUMMARY

Mesa Community College fully meets Criteria 4 and its Core Components. The vision, mission, and goals speak directly to the college's commitment to promote a life of learning by fostering and supporting the acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge. MCC's planning and patterns of financial allocation ensure the future capacity of its internal constituents – the students, the faculty, staff, and administrators – to purposefully engage in learning, living and working in a global, diverse and technological society. A multitude of evidence points to the college's support for professional growth and continuous learning for all employees. While primarily a teaching institution, the college supports and encourages scholarship and research in its multiple dimensions. The move towards more formally defining the practice of scholarship enhances the existing exemplary work of the college.

A clearly articulated general education philosophy provides the foundation for a rich general education curriculum that is also reflected in the stated student learning outcomes for general education and the assessment of these outcomes. The curriculum is aligned with the college mission and supports inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility. Likewise, career and technical programs include a general education component as well as clearly stated interdisciplinary workplace outcomes that ensure students are prepared for the diverse, global and technological society in which they will work. Currency, usefulness and relevance are regularly assessed by both internal and external audiences to ensure their continued applicability. A wide array of student life activities engage students in their communities, build social responsibility and leadership skills, and reinforce the learning inherent in the curriculum. The attitudes, knowledge and skills requisite for responsible and ethical use of knowledge are learned by students and modeled by faculty and staff. In total, MCC offers a diversity of offerings and programs that create a rich and well-rounded academic climate and a complete collegiate experience for students.

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The richness and diversity of Mesa Community College's general education curriculum allow students to choose from a wide range of course options to fulfill general education requirements. General education student learning outcomes have been clearly defined and performance on these outcomes is assessed systematically and regularly. Assessment results demonstrate significant student learning in general education. Articulation agreements with state and other universities allow students to transfer their general education credits to four-year institutions.

Workplace skills have been defined as student learning outcomes for students participating in career and technical programs. These skills are assessed annually and results consistently show that students completing career and technical programs outperform students beginning their programs of study.

Pursuit of a life of learning pervades all facets of the college community and is manifested in numerous ways through professional development and other personal and professional growth activities. As the academic culture of the college evolves, there is a growing emphasis on participation in research and scholarship, both basic and applied, and especially in the areas of teaching and learning.

As this emphasis on research and scholarship develops, the college needs to examine how such pursuits are documented, recognized, and rewarded. It will also be necessary in the near future to develop more formalized research guidelines, policies, and procedures to ensure that individuals conduct scholarly activities using accepted research practice.

Students will benefit from more structured emphasis upon, and opportunities for, practicing scholarship within their coursework. Such scholarly activities will reinforce the responsible use of knowledge and the application of technology to enhance student learning.

Chapter 7

Engagement and Service

- Serving Diverse College Constituencies
- Investment in Community Outreach
- Building Community Partnerships
- Valuing College Services



Chapter 7

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- Serving Diverse College Constituencies
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Criterion 5: Engagement and Service: As called for by its mission, Mesa Community College identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

From MCC's mission...

The college is a community resource for transfer education, career preparation, developmental education, economic development, and continuous learning. Our ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life in the community we serve.

From MCC's values...

Mesa Community College values a sense of community - both the community we serve and the community we create within. As students, faculty and staff, we have a civic responsibility to our community that is expressed through community involvement and volunteerism. We actively pursue collaborative partnerships with the community. We value our college community and encourage the engagement of all through participation, collaboration, and communication.

INTRODUCTION

As a community college, community is inherent to MCC's purpose. A commitment to serving the community is well articulated in the mission and values, and the college demonstrates this commitment through numerous programs, services, and partnerships that both serve and engage the community. It regularly seeks feedback from constituents in order to ensure that programs and services are developed in accordance with community needs and priorities.

Identification of MCC's constituencies begins with the mission. Constituencies include students who enroll in the college to earn credits and/or degrees that will transfer to other institutions of higher education; students who are preparing for a career or upgrading skills to improve career options; students who are academically under-prepared and wish to improve skills to succeed in college work. Constituencies include members of the community: people who seek programs or services that contribute to the economic and workforce development of the region; people who wish to learn something new for their own personal growth or personal interest; people who need to continue their education to meet requirements related to their field of work; and people who come to the college to attend an event for education or enrichment.

The college actively seeks collaborative partnerships with the community that are mutually valuable and beneficial and that are consistent with MCC's mission.

Constituencies are diverse in every way: they are young, mid-life and elderly; they are native Arizonans, mid-westerners, easterners, immigrants, and international; they represent many races, religions, countries and languages; they are wealthy, middle-income and poor – they are a microcosm of society. The college cannot be all things to all people, but it can and does open its doors to all people and provide the opportunities, time and place for them to learn.

The college actively seeks collaborative partnerships with the community that are mutually valuable and beneficial and that are consistent with MCC's mission. Community members engage and participate in college affairs in numerous ways; at the same time students, faculty and staff engage, participate and contribute to the community. This chapter addresses some of the most important examples of how MCC engages and serves, carries out its mission to improve the quality of life, and seeks feedback from its many constituencies.

Core Component 5a: Mesa Community College learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

MCC is contacted regularly by individuals and groups wishing to engage in collaborative efforts or activities. The range of contacts is considerable and in the past decade has included diverse needs such as the following: senior citizens wishing to develop special programs for retirees, fire fighters pursuing continuing education opportunities, high technology companies needing corporate training, the Hispanic community requesting ESL classes in community-based locations, community groups seeking venues for gatherings, healthcare providers and hospitals seeking programs to relieve the shortage of healthcare workers, area school districts seeking educational opportunities for their employees, and city officials wanting a more prominent college presence for the downtown area.

MCC learns of these needs through numerous means both formal and informal; they may be channeled through an official organization or made known by an individual. The college engages groups and individuals in a variety of ways to ensure that all constituent voices can be heard and considered. These include community advisory groups, program-specific advisory groups (e.g., business and industry representatives providing input into technical programs), collaboratives with other educational institutions, and formal relationships with municipalities and community-based organizations. (See Resource Room: Department Chair and Director/Manager Interviews and Contractual Agreements.)

Each request brings with it both opportunities and challenges that must be considered. Is the request consistent with the college mission? Does the college have the resources – human resources, financial resources, and physical capacity – to support the request? Are there unanticipated benefits or consequences that might result? This section highlights four major ways that MCC learns from various constituencies: the Commission on Excellence in Education, Program Advisory Councils, the Changing Demographics Project, and the Center for Community Education.

COMMISSION ON EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

The President's Commission on Excellence in Education is an active community advisory group with a general membership of approximately 800 and an Executive Council of 55. Members represent individuals working in business, industry, government, tourism, the arts, non-profit sector and education throughout the MCC service area. Dr. Debra Duvall, Superintendent of Mesa Public Schools, is the 2003-2005 chair of the Commission. In her message in a recent annual report she states, "It is important for an educational institution to be responsive to the changing needs of the community, and Commission members serve an essential function in this effort. They provide information and ideas that reflect community perspectives."

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– Debra Duvall, Commission Chair

The Commission provides a forum for community members to inform the college of the community's changing educational needs and to advise the President about community issues. The Executive Council meets six times, and the general membership meets twice, each academic year. Each meeting is centered on an issue or topic of importance to the college community. Members hear a short presentation and then participate in roundtable discussions in which they provide feedback to questions. This feedback is used to help shape many important college decisions. For example, Commission members have provided extensive input and support for capital development and facilities planning projects. The Commission was instrumental in promoting the establishment of Red Mountain as a second comprehensive campus, and the Red Mountain Advisory Council was formed as a sub-committee of the Commission to address issues specific to that campus. All Commission activities are documented in annual reports. (See Resource Room: *Commission on Excellence in Education Annual Reports*.)

PROGRAM ADVISORY COUNCILS

... the Nursing Program advisory council provides recommendations about how the college can help alleviate the nursing shortage in the metropolitan area.

Another important voice that informs educational program directions is that of advisory councils which are required for all career and technical programs. Advisory councils include workforce representatives and employers from the field; program review teams often include a member of the program's advisory council.

Councils meet with faculty once each semester with the explicit purpose of providing feedback about the program's currency and relevance; they play a vital role in helping programs stay current with industry changes, expectations and standards. There are numerous examples of how career and technical program directors use advisory council feedback to make programmatic changes. For example, the Nursing Program advisory council provides recommendations about how the college can help alleviate the nursing shortage in the metropolitan area. MCC's School of

Education advisory council provides advice regarding the professional development needs of instructional assistants and teachers which leads to programmatic changes. And the Business advisory council has recommended numerous curricular changes, such as supply chain management and project management, which are now incorporated into business courses. Many program directors seek feedback from members on a continuous basis in an effort to ensure program viability and to stay abreast of new developments in the workforce. (See Resource Room: Department Chair Interviews and Program Reviews.)

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS PROJECT

Sharing a border with Mexico is one of Arizona's great assets, providing a rich diversity of people and culture. As the state and the economy have grown over the past decade, so too has the state experienced an influx of immigrants from Mexico and other parts of Latin America.

In response to this changing socioeconomic trend, in 2001 MCC's Hispanic Task Force, an ad hoc group of interested faculty, staff and administrators, began to study the issue in earnest and presented a report to the college leadership regarding the dramatic demographic shifts in the city of Mesa as revealed by the 2000 Census. Mesa was not only growing, it was shifting from a strictly suburban bedroom community to a much more diverse urban-suburban one. Census 2000 data showed that overall the city population grew 38% during the 1990's (from 288,000 to 396,000); this compared to the national average growth rate of 13%. Mesa's Hispanic population had increased 150% – from 31,000 in the 1990 Census to 78,000 in 2000; one in five of the city's residents claimed Hispanic ethnicity. A number

of census tracts in the city's older neighborhoods had Hispanic concentrations over 65%. By 2004, the total city population had swelled by almost 50,000 more residents to 445,000.

(See Resource Room: Census Data.)

Public school enrollments reflect the relatively young age of Hispanics compared to non-Hispanics. Mesa Public Schools, a large district of almost 84,000 students, has experienced very rapid growth in Hispanic student enrollments with current (2003-2004) enrollments just over 30%. *(See Resource Room: Mesa Public Schools Student Demographics.)* This same trend is reflected in the public schools in other cities served by MCC, such as Tempe and Chandler. MCC's Hispanic student population has also been growing, albeit not as rapidly as surrounding school districts, and currently comprises 15% of the student body. While the college population would not be expected to mirror the public school population due to differences in ages of the populations, these data provide a picture of the student "pipeline" feeding the college. That is, the college can expect, and needs to prepare for, significant increases in the Hispanic student population based upon current enrollments in surrounding public schools.

The work of the Hispanic Task Force revealed that, although MCC had a number of programs and agendas related to diversity issues, the college needed to develop a more coordinated and systematic approach to addressing local population changes and projections. Therefore, in 2002 the President initiated the Changing Demographics Project and made it a strategic priority for the college. The project is led by two former presidents of Maricopa Colleges who are participating in the active retirement program at MCC. Participants in the project review and analyze changes in population in the MCC service area, identify issues relating to education, economic development and leadership, and make recommendations about the implications of this information for the college.

Since its formation in 2002, the individuals working on the Changing Demographics Project have engaged in numerous activities aimed at carrying out its charge. The college's fall 2002 convocation included a presentation by researchers from Arizona State University about national, state, and local demographic trends and the implications of those trends for MCC. The college has hosted and co-sponsored three Latino Town Halls focused on Latino issues in Mesa, which typically draw several hundred people. The October 2004 Town Hall was organized around five tracks: economic development, education, health, leadership, and youth. Through the Town Halls, specific recommendations are generated for how MCC can respond to the needs of this constituent group.

Engagement and Service

One specific recommendation that has been implemented as the result of Changing Demographics is the establishment of an ESL Student Services Center that provides one-stop enrollment services for non-English speaking students. Another is the creation of a new position, Community Partnership Liaison, which is shared between Mesa Public Schools and MCC. The liaison focuses on outreach to the Latino community, markets and coordinates activities, and helps identify programmatic and service needs. In addition, in September 2004 the Mesa Minority and Small Business Center was established. The center, which is housed at the MCC Downtown Center, is co-sponsored by Mesa Community College, Mesa Association of Hispanic Citizens, and several public and non-profit business service providers. Business counselors from the MCCCCD Small Business Development Center, the East Valley Service Corps of Retired Executives, and the Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation are available three mornings each week to meet with entrepreneurs in need of assistance to establish or grow their businesses. (*See Resource Room: Changing Demographics Project.*)

Other initiatives designed to meet the needs of the Hispanic population have been designed by the Reading and Nursing Departments. The Reading Department offers English-as-a-Second-Language classes for parents at three Mesa elementary schools located in heavily Hispanic neighborhoods. The department also collaborates with the Center for Community Education to offer non-credit Basic Survival English as well as ESL classes.

In direct response to workforce needs, the Nursing Department has developed a Bilingual Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program which is designed for limited English-proficient students to improve their English skills while earning their CNA certification and to become bilingual health care workers. The third cohort of 20 students is enrolled currently. Another initiative is the “Enfermeras en Escalera” (Nurses on a Ladder) Program which provides a fast-track program for foreign-educated nurses seeking licensure as registered nurses in the United States. This program seeks to identify highly motivated foreign-educated nurses; increase their oral, written, and reading skills in English; increase their cultural competency; prepare them to succeed in passing the NCLEX-RN examination; and assist them in their transition to becoming professional nurses in the United States. Through these and other developing programs, the college continues to pursue strategies to meet the unique needs of an increasingly diverse population.

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION

MCC’s Center for Community Education provides community-oriented programs directly supporting the college mission. Each year, more than 4,000 community members take

advantage of non-credit personal interest classes on topics as diverse as the arts, computers, health and wellness, career development, and money management. The Center's Office of Senior Adult Programs provides intellectual and cultural opportunities specifically for people of retirement age, and also hosts New Frontiers for Learning in Retirement which offers interactive study groups, social events, and volunteer activities. The Center is also responsible for coordinating a variety of continuing education opportunities for professionals working in the community. Every class offered through the Center for Community Education is evaluated by the participants and the feedback is used regularly to make program additions and modifications. (*See Resource Room: Center for Community Education.*) In addition, some academic departments offer continuing education opportunities. For example, the Psychology Department's Evening Lecture Series, which brings notable speakers to the college six times a year, provides professional development for practicing psychologists.

Most recently, the Center received a three-year \$534,000 grant from the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust to serve as the lead organization in a public/private partnership with the City of Mesa and Mesa Senior Services, Inc. The "Mesa Life Options" project will leverage resources from a variety of community partners to create programs to assist people in pre- and early retirement years in successfully transitioning from their current careers to active retirement years.

The Commission on Excellence in Education, program advisory councils, Changing Demographics Project, and Center for Community Education illustrate a few of the formalized ways in which the college learns from its many constituencies and uses constituent feedback to inform planning, program development and decision making. A wealth of qualitative and anecdotal feedback is also received from community members by MCC administrators, faculty and staff as they interact with community members on projects and programs. By maintaining open communications with the community, MCC is able to better meet constituent needs.

The Community Leaders and Partners survey provides quantitative data about community perceptions of, and satisfaction with, the college and how it carries out its mission. These results show a very positive perception of the college among the group of individuals surveyed, with responses to virtually all items extremely positive. For example, 87% agreed or strongly agreed that MCC appropriately seeks feedback from the community about college directions, initiatives and activities, and 96% agreed or strongly agreed that the college enhances the quality of life in the local community. (*See Resource Room: Community*

Leaders and Partners Survey.) Seeking similar input from other community constituent groups would provide the college with perceptions from other stakeholders who may not be represented by those surveyed in the Community Leaders and Partners Survey.

Core Component 5b: Mesa Community College has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

Through its strategic goal focusing on civic responsibility, the MCC Strategic Plan illustrates the college's ongoing commitment to civic responsibility and to engaging the community. (See *Resource Room: Strategic Plan 2004-2007.*) Moreover the college has a solid resource base resulting in the capacity to fulfill these commitments. The college has allocated significant human and financial resources to community-based initiatives and programs. This focus is demonstrated in areas such as the Center for Service Learning, the Center for Public Policy, Extended Campus, and the abundance of cultural-enrichment opportunities available through the arts and other co-curricular venues, and the Rose Garden.

CENTER FOR SERVICE LEARNING

Perhaps the most cogent example of the commitment to community service and engagement is the Center for Service Learning (CSL). The Center's mission is to promote excellence in teaching and learning through the integration of academic study with active service... to collaborate with the community, encourage civic engagement, promote personal growth, and foster social responsibility. Service learning is a teaching and learning method that connects meaningful community service with academic learning through guided reflection. The Center is staffed with a full-time faculty director, two program advisors, a secretary, and two part-time staff. (See *Resource Room: Center for Service Learning.*)

Service learning is a teaching and learning method that connects meaningful community service with academic learning through guided reflection.

Students participate in service learning in a number of different ways. The integration of service learning into existing courses allows students to participate in community service in lieu of a research paper, class presentation or exams. Students are required to demonstrate learning outcomes as a result of their service. In academic year 2003-2004, more than 1,000 students completed this option in courses taught by 32 faculty members representing 12 disciplines. Internship-type independent modules provide another option for students; these include a blend of academic study and community service under the supervision of a faculty member within the discipline. Core requirements include 50 volunteer contact hours per credit hour, a learning plan, a reflective journal, an analytical paper and attendance at three

reflective sessions. The Center for Service Learning offers faculty development to assist interested faculty in incorporating service learning into their courses. Each semester, students in these programs provide approximately 40,000 hours of service to the community through placements with over 200 community-based agencies, programs and schools. Other Center programs include America Reads, in which MCC students tutor elementary school students, and Americorps. The Center hosts the largest Americorps program in the state; 370 students have served over 115,000 hours of community service and received more than \$200,000 in educational scholarships.

The Center has conducted the first phase of a service learning program evaluation for the in-class, independent module, and Americorps components of the program. A pre-post service learning assessment was pilot-tested in 2004, and the assessment instrument is now under revision. (*See Resource Room: CSL - Pilot of the Service Learning Program Evaluation.*) Reflection journals provide qualitative data about the impact of service learning experiences. The book *Reflections of Engagement*, published with grant support from national service learning organizations, includes a number of essays by MCC students describing their experiences. (*See Resource Room: CSL - Reflections of Engagement.*)

The Connector Program is another service learning experience for students that started with support from the CSL and a local Campus Compact grant. This is now a stand alone program between MCC's Fire Science Department and the Mesa Fire Department, with students receiving service learning credit. Students are trained as volunteers who assist fire and emergency crews after emergency calls. These Connector volunteers work with people who have experienced an emergency situation and need to access community services and resources that often follow an emergency. The Connector Program has become a model for others throughout the country and has been shared through a series of national workshops. (*See Resource Room: Connector Program.*)

CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

This center is a community resource that addresses policy issues of concern to the college and its constituencies through forums, programs, and publications; interacts on behalf of the college on public issues; and builds new community partnerships. The Center for Public Policy (CPP) facilitates activities for the Mesa Community Roundtable, which is comprised of the senior leadership from Mesa local government, schools and colleges, and businesses who meet regularly to share information, and the East Valley Think Tank, whose members include educational leaders representing pre-K through university institutions throughout the East Valley. Through the CPP, MCC helps organize the annual Arizona Issues Forum in

partnership with the Arizona Humanities Council and the local CBS affiliate. CPP staff members have played a key role in working with the city of Mesa on the college's downtown Mesa partnership. The Center for Public Policy director is also director of the Maricopa District's Center for Civic Participation which has the goal of providing ways to partner with community groups to discuss and address issues of regional importance. Its key themes are civic leadership, public issues discussion, participation in public life, and voting and voter registration. Most recently, CPP sponsored a forum about the future of biotechnology and its impact on college programs.

EXTENDED CAMPUS

MCC's Extended Campus is responsible for all off-campus credit offerings as well as a five-week winter intersession and the dual enrollment program. It provides access to courses in non-traditional timeframes at two downtown Mesa locations, at Tempe High School, and the Williams Campus. Extended Campus locations enable individuals who might not be able to attend class in more traditional settings and timeframes to access needed coursework. The Extended Campus director and the Dean of Instruction also collaborate with other institutions interested in educational partnerships. Such partnerships include the Arizona School of Health Sciences, the East Valley Institute of Technology, Northern Arizona University, and several charter schools. These Extended Campus activities characterize MCC's responsiveness to its constituents and commitment to its mission. (*See Resource Room: Extended Campus.*)

THE ARTS AND OTHER COMMUNITY-ORIENTED EVENTS

MCC's Music and Art Departments and Theatre and Dance programs contribute significantly to the cultural fabric of the community. Community members come to the college to attend arts events including four major theatrical productions, dance performances, musical productions, concert performances, and art exhibits. The Music Department offers a number of summer programs for children. Additionally, the athletic program hosts sporting events throughout the year and many departments and programs provide services, activities and events that benefit and involve the community. In an effort to increase understanding of local, regional and state issues, public policy forums and lectures address a wide range of current policy and political topics of importance to the community. All these college events are promoted and open to the public. In addition, community groups are welcome to use MCC's facilities, and college records show that 60 different community agencies and organizations regularly utilize the facilities for events or meetings. (*See Resource Room: Co-curricular Events and Activities.*)

Numerous other college-sponsored activities rely upon considerable college resources to serve the local community. Water Safety Day is held each April and is coordinated through MCC in partnership with local fire departments, businesses, and Phoenix Children's Hospital. Each year, this event provides drowning prevention activities and demonstrations to hundreds of elementary school children who come to MCC for the day. A formal evaluation of Water Safety Day and its associated curriculum was conducted by an external evaluator and showed a positive impact on elementary school students' awareness and knowledge related to drowning prevention. (*See Resource Room: Water Safety Day.*) An annual Science Day, sponsored by the Physical Science and Life Science departments, engages elementary school students from Title I schools in interesting hands-on science experiments and demonstrations. Interviews conducted for the self study indicate that virtually every department at the college is involved in some way in community outreach programs and services that include students, faculty, staff and community members. (*See Resource Room: Department Chair and Department Director/Manager Interview Results.*)

THE ROSE GARDEN

The largest rose garden in the southwest, displaying 5,000 rose bushes of more than 500 varieties that bloom almost year-round, enhances the north entrance to MCC's Southern and Dobson campus. The garden was established in 1996 in partnership with the Mesa-East Valley Rose Society and has since been expanded through several phases. Businesses have donated supplies, materials, labor, and dollars to the project. Individuals have sponsored rose beds and volunteered thousands of hours planting and caring for the roses under the guidance of Rose Society members. Community members are encouraged to consider the garden as a demonstration center for rose and tree varieties as well as a setting for special events and social gatherings. MCC provides professional staff time, promotional materials, and the overall grounds landscaping and maintenance for the garden. Through the efforts of the college working in concert with countless volunteers and contributors, the garden has become a landmark in the city.

At the February 2004 meeting of the Commission on Excellence in Education, executive committee members participated in a discussion about community engagement. When asked how MCC demonstrates a commitment to engage its constituents, they responded with the following: the college is proactive rather than reactive in its efforts, the college constantly seeks new partnerships, and the college reaches out to nontraditional students through its programs and services. When asked how the college's role in the community will change in the future, members envisioned increased focus on re-careering programs, adult learners, distance learning and underserved populations. They also noted there will be fewer

Engagement and Service

boundaries among the K-12, community college, and university systems. *(See Resource Room: Commission on Excellence in Education Discussion Results.)*

Core Component 5c: Mesa Community College demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

As one of Arizona’s largest institutions of higher education – and consistent with the college’s mission – it is incumbent upon MCC to respond to the specific educational and career needs of many groups. This section specifically addresses how the college demonstrates its responsiveness to various constituencies through programs targeting:

- students transitioning from the K-12 system to the community college;
- students transferring from the community college to the university;
- the changing needs of the workforce, as exemplified through the work of the Business & Industry Institute/Network Academy;
- students and employers seeking specialized career and technical programs; and
- student access through a more prominent MCC presence in downtown Mesa.

K-12 PARTNERSHIPS

MCC’s two comprehensive campuses draw students from high schools not only in their immediate service areas but from throughout the East Valley of the metropolitan area. Each academic year, approximately 3,000 new students enroll at MCC directly from an Arizona high school; the table below shows a five-year trend of this data.

Table 7-1

NEW HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES ATTENDING MCC THE FOLLOWING ACADEMIC YEAR 5-YEAR TREND				
AY 1999-2000	AY 2000-2001	AY 2001-2002	AY 2002-2003	AY 2003-2004
2,851	2,998	2,977	3,146	3,271

In the most recent academic year, 77% of these students matriculated from 17 high schools in the surrounding school districts of Mesa Public Schools (40%), Tempe Union (19%), Gilbert Unified (13%), and Chandler Unified (5%). Clearly, “traditional” college students attending college directly after high school are an important constituent group, and partnerships that create seamless educational pathways are beneficial to them. One way MCC facilitates the high school/college transition is through its recruitment office and

events like Thunder Days and Op Shop. (See Resource Room: Recruitment Services.) The college also has invested in expanding higher educational opportunities for many Arizona youth through the REACH program.

REACH is MCC's scholarship-based program designed to improve access to higher education for high school students who might not otherwise attend college.

REACH (Raising Expectations for Achievement and Community Service through Higher Education) is MCC's scholarship-based program designed to improve access to higher education for high school students who might not otherwise attend college. The program was started with seed money from the Maricopa District's Achieving a College Education (ACE) Program and is now supported through college funding. Students apply for REACH in their sophomore year at high school and, if accepted, begin taking college courses that summer. A community service component is currently being developed and will be integrated with academic study. Students have the potential to earn 24 community college credits by the time they graduate from high school. REACH began in 2002 with 60 students; by fall 2004, a total of 160 students from eight area high schools were participating. A profile of REACH students is shown in Table 7-2 below:

Table 7-2

PROFILE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN MCC REACH PROGRAM FALL 2004		
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	Number	Percent
Hispanic	81	51%
African American	10	6%
American In/Alaska Native	12	8%
Asian	10	6%
White	35	22%
Other	12	8%
Total	160	100%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	39	24%
Female	121	75%
Total	160	100%

Engagement and Service

A comprehensive program evaluation component tracks student progress throughout the completion of the program and into the community college and university systems. (*See Resource Room: REACH Program.*)

Another important program for high school students is the dual enrollment option that enables high school juniors and seniors to earn college credit for high school classes that meet certain criteria. In academic year 2003-2004, 985 students from 13 high schools completed dual enrollment credit through MCC. Course completion data show that 98% of them completed the class successfully (i.e., with a grade of A, B or C). Concurrent enrollment enables public school students to enroll in regular MCC credit classes, with the stipulation that they have taken the necessary placement tests. In addition to these opportunities for high school students, several specialized programs have recruiter/advisors who work directly with the public schools to raise awareness among their students about programmatic options at MCC.

MCC is home to, and provides staff support for, the East Valley Think Tank. This educational consortium includes the administrative leadership of 19 public institutions – pre-K through 12 school districts, community colleges, and universities – that comprise the East Valley of the Phoenix metropolitan area. The Think Tank provides a forum to grow new ideas for educational collaborations that will help transition the educational community into the 21st Century. They have developed an advocacy network for education in the region, collaborated on projects of mutual interest, and communicated and shared resources. An example of the East Valley Think Tank's ability to form such partnerships occurred in the mid '90s when it was the catalyst for establishing an educational mall at the former Williams Air Force Base. This effort has become a national model not only for the reuse of a closed military facility but for establishing an innovative education and training system. (*See Resource Room: East Valley Think Tank.*)

MCC also hosts the East Valley Tech Prep Consortium which serves the east and north sides of Maricopa County and includes high schools and community colleges throughout Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert, Tempe, Queen Creek, Scottsdale, Paradise Valley, and Fountain Hills. (*See Resource Room: Tech Prep.*) Tech Prep is a federally-funded national initiative that combines rigorous academics with high-tech skills training in a coherent sequence of courses. Beginning with the last two years of high school and continuing through completion of a two-year degree or certificate in college, the Tech Prep program provides a clear path from high school to college to a career.

Finally, many MCC departments have specialized public school partnerships. One example is the Cultural Science Department's School of Education which, in fall 2004, offered 37 sections of education classes designed for Mesa Public School employees who take the classes at their school sites. Teachers can take coursework required for ESL/Multicultural and Reading Specialist endorsements, and instructional aides can work toward their associate's degree or earn credits to meet the new requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. Similarly, the Reading Department offers ESL reading classes at several public elementary schools geared toward non-English speaking parents.

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS, ARTICULATION, AND TRANSFER

MCC is situated in close proximity to one of the nation's largest research universities, Arizona State University (ASU), and as such has served a large transfer population since its founding. Student headcount for all ASU sites in fall 2003 was over 57,000; the majority of these students attend at the Tempe campus, just four miles from MCC's Dobson and Southern campus. Approximately 4,000 students attend the ASU East campus (soon to be renamed ASU Polytechnic), which is located a few miles south of MCC's Red Mountain campus and specializes in technology and applied science programs.

In fall 2002, over 9,332 undergraduates at the three Arizona universities had transferred credits from MCC - almost 8,000 of these were enrolled at ASU.

There are two other public universities in the state: the University of Arizona (U of A) located in Tucson and Northern Arizona University (NAU) located in Flagstaff. In fall 2002, over 9,332 undergraduates enrolled at the three public Arizona universities had transferred credits from MCC – almost 8,000 of these were enrolled at ASU. About 2,500 former MCC students earned a bachelor's degree at an Arizona university in 2002-2003, with 95% of these from ASU. *(See Resource Room: Focus on Effectiveness, and other transfer reports.)*¹

MCC and the Maricopa District have a long history of partnering with ASU, U of A, and NAU, as well as with other four-year institutions. The Maricopa District and its member colleges have formal transfer articulation agreements with a total of 30 colleges and universities including Ottawa University, Grand Canyon University, Prescott College, and the University of Phoenix. MCC also has an articulation partnership with Brigham Young University. These articulation partnerships help ensure a smooth transfer process that benefits students as they matriculate between institutions. In addition, MCC faculty

¹ The ASSIST database includes all students enrolled in public community colleges and public universities in Arizona. Comparable transfer data are not available for private colleges and universities or those located out of state.

Engagement and Service

members serve as discipline representatives on statewide articulation task forces that address curriculum articulation issues between the community colleges and the universities. In essence, MCC transfer degrees articulate as a block with specific majors in Arizona's public universities; this means that individual courses are not evaluated separately for transferability. A student wishing to transfer credit hours but not a complete degree will have his or her transcript evaluated on a course-by-course basis. Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees also transfer to Bachelor of Applied Science programs offered at some universities. A detailed description titled "Transferring Your College Credits" is included in the MCC Catalog. (*See Resource Room: College Catalog and Transfer Center.*)

Academic advisors assist students in selecting the appropriate transferable courses, and MCC's Transfer Services provides information about, and support for, the transfer process. Academic departments also help facilitate transfer by bringing university representatives from specific disciplines to meet with MCC students, co-sponsoring projects and events, and maintaining informal collegial and professional connections among the faculty. While the formal articulation agreements are designed to ensure smooth transfer, the many transfer degree options can be confusing. In addition, specific programs within the universities may have exceptions and or additions to the requirements, and advisement is sometimes difficult. This might help explain the results from the Student Assessment of the College Environment (SACE) survey which showed relatively low satisfaction with academic advisement services, with an overall mean rating of 3.32 on a 5-point scale. Ongoing efforts focus on enhancing these services at the college.

Because of MCC's close proximity to ASU, the two institutions have partnered on numerous projects. These include National Science Foundation (NSF) grants such as the Foundation Coalition project to reform undergraduate education in engineering and the Maricopa Engineering Transition Scholars program which assists students in transferring to the Engineering College. (*See Resource Room: NSF Grants.*) MCC is an active partner in ASU's Preparing Future Faculty program which prepares doctoral students for careers as college and university professors. Most recently, the college became a partner in the Maricopa-ASU Alliance, a pilot program for MCC honor's students who can benefit from special scholarship opportunities and customized transfer services and options. (*See Resource Room: Honor's Program; ASU Alliance.*)

Survey data indicate that students, employees and community members alike believe that MCC is fulfilling the transfer aspect of its mission. The graduate exit survey shows that 61% of MCC 2004 graduates reported they feel very well prepared to transfer and 35% said they

are somewhat prepared. This is up from the year 2000 when 53% reported they felt very well prepared, indicating a positive trend in student perceptions. Eighty-six percent of MCC employees agree or strongly agree that the college effectively facilitates student transfer to four-year colleges and universities, and 77% of community members rated MCC very good or excellent in preparing students to transfer. As a major transfer institution, MCC must constantly review and reevaluate its transfer services and programs to ensure the optimum transfer experience and success after transfer for its students.

BUSINESS & INDUSTRY INSTITUTE/NETWORK ACADEMY

The Business & Industry Institute (B&II) is located in the MCC Downtown Center at Centennial Way, occupying rental space on the fourth floor of a city-owned building. B&II is MCC's most visible interface with the high technology corporate sector in the region and demonstrates the college's responsiveness to this important constituency. With a 15-year history of providing training solutions, B&II has played a major role in the economic development of the region as it has transitioned to a high technology knowledge-based economy. B&II offers non-credit programs through major industry partnerships which include the following: Sun Microsystem Authorized Sun Education Center; Cisco Networking Academy Teacher Training Center for Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah; Oracle Workforce Development Partner; Sair Linux and GNU Systems; and Ascendant Systems, Security Certified Professional Training Center. Students typically complete certification training programs in intensive one-week formats.

In academic year 2003-2004, almost 500 individuals received more than 18,000 hours of training through B&II. Due to the nature of B&II's corporate partnerships, numerous contractual and intergovernmental agreements are required. (*See Resource Room: Contractual Agreements.*) As evidence of effectiveness, the B&II was selected as the Top Authorized Sun Education Center for 2003-2004 based on quality scores. (*See Resource Room: Business & Industry Institute.*)

The Network Academy, which is co-located with B&II and under the same director, offers coursework leading to MCC degree and certificate programs in rapidly emerging information technology fields. Network Academy courses lead to MCC Associate of Applied Science degrees in Networking System Administration, Linux Networking Administration, and Information Assurance (Network Security). These AAS degrees transfer to the Bachelor of Applied Science program at ASU East. Students also can take the coursework required to earn MCC Certificates of Completion in Network Administration (Microsoft Windows, Cisco, UNIX/Solaris, Novell); Linux; Network Security; Information Assurance; and Cyber

In January 2004, the Network Academy program was recognized by the Bush Administration as a model for high technology workforce development and re-careering training.

Forensic Technician. Students in Network Academy classes are regularly surveyed to gather information about satisfaction with the program, progress through the program, and goal attainment. In January 2004, the Network Academy program was recognized by the Bush Administration as a model for high technology workforce development and re-careering training. President George W. Bush visited the college and conducted a panel discussion with three Network Academy students. *(See Resource Room: Network Academy.)*

SPECIALIZED CAREER AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

MCC has numerous other partnerships indicative of the college's responsiveness to business, industry, and workforce constituencies. One recent example is the development of the Caterpillar Technician Training Program. Approximately five years ago, MCC administrators initiated a meeting with the management of Empire Southwest Corporation, a Caterpillar dealership and one of Mesa's largest employers. A collaboration began on the development of a partnership that would result in an AAS degree to train heavy equipment technicians, a high demand technical career. MCC would be one of 10 colleges nationwide providing this degree program, which would serve a four-state area. For the next three years, through a close collaboration involving college administrators, a lead faculty member from the automotive program, and Empire Southwest personnel, a new AAS degree program was developed – the Think BIG Apprentice Program. Over a two-year period, students alternate classroom instruction with paid internships every eight-weeks. The first class of 16 was accepted into the program in 2003, and a second class of 24 (from a pool of 155 applicants) was accepted in 2004. *(See Resource Room: Workforce Development-Caterpillar Technician Training Program.)* Similar partnerships have resulted in the development of the fast-track evening nursing program and the dental hygiene/dental assisting program.

MCC DOWNTOWN

For the past two years, MCC has been engaged in planning discussions with officials from the city of Mesa who have requested that the college be an integral part of a major downtown redevelopment project. A task force from the college was assigned to work with the city on a feasibility study which was completed in 2003. A series of meetings and town halls followed, seeking input from members of both the internal and external college communities. In September 2004, a joint meeting of the Maricopa Community Colleges Governing Board and the Mesa City Council was held and resulted in a signed Memorandum of Understanding outlining the general terms of a more prominent presence for MCC in the downtown area.

The overarching vision as outlined in the MOU is to enable MCC and the city of Mesa to develop a “digital downtown” linking education, business, government and entertainment with emerging technologies. A downtown campus would enable MCC to offer educational programs that respond to changing demographics, help to revitalize the urban core of the region’s second largest city and promote economic development through training programs and business partnerships. Existing downtown space currently rented by the college would be replaced by a permanent facility, or facilities, to be built or renovated as part of the redevelopment project. With the passage of the 2004 bond referendum, the college plans to aggressively pursue the downtown partnership, establish specific programmatic directions for the downtown location, and increase student access to quality programs. (*See Resource Room: Downtown Campus.*)

MCC takes seriously its responsibility to respond to the workforce development needs of the corporate sector. This constituency regularly seeks out the college; at the same time, the college actively pursues partnerships that are consistent with its mission and that are beneficial to students, the college, and the industry partner. The result is numerous programs that contribute to the economic vitality of the region and that prepare students for employment in skilled, high-demand fields.

Core Component 5d: Internal and external constituencies value the services Mesa Community College provides.

In order to address whether constituencies value the services the college provides, one must first decide how value might be demonstrated, expressed, measured, and documented. For this report, value is represented by what people say about the college, whether and how they participate in college activities and groups, and how they support the college through a variety of means.

Both internal and external constituents were asked on surveys and in interviews, “What sets Mesa Community College apart from other institutions of higher learning?” Responses to this question covered a wide range of positive aspects about the college, but the predominant themes among internal constituents were support for innovation and professional development, and the advantages inherent in being a large organization. These are all highly valued factors associated with MCC. One department director summarized it this way in an interview: *“I think our size allows us to effect change. If we didn’t have the size, we couldn’t try so many new things, make mistakes, revise, and continue the process of innovation. It makes us different...It’s a luxury but we have to stay vigilant and accountable.”*

Engagement and Service

Responses of community members echoed this idea, and also focused on how the college responds to the changing needs of the community, its low cost, accessibility, and breadth of programs. Wrote one community respondent, *“The college’s leadership encourages its faculty to be a part of the activities of the community and to risk starting innovative programs.”*

Community members participate in college committees, serve on advisory boards, volunteer time, use the facilities, and attend the many events and activities offered. Many diverse events are open to the public including readings, a literary festival, theatre and musical performances, and lectures. The college has a strong community education and service learning program and numerous partnerships with community organizations. When available, college facilities are available to and used by the public and by other organizations.

An active Alumni Board provides vision for alumni activities, identifies opportunities for alumni to give back to the college, and pursues outreach efforts. Internal and external constituents donate money for scholarships: in fiscal year 2003-2004 alone, student scholarships funded by private donations exceeded \$1.5 million. Perhaps most importantly, the East Valley community has consistently supported district bond referendums through the election process, allowing the college to keep pace with the growing population, emerging technology, and aging infrastructure.

All of these indicators point to the fact that MCC’s internal and external constituencies value the services provided by the college. Yet, in gathering evidence for the self study it became apparent that there is room for improvement, particularly in regard to systematically documenting how the college is valued. For example, while many individual programs and services track community participation in and satisfaction with college activities, there is not a common or collective college-wide documentation system for such. Furthermore, the Community Leaders and Partners survey provided rich and affirming data regarding the perceptions of this group about the college. But because it was not a random sample survey of the community at-large, it may not have provided an adequate voice to the underserved members of the community.

SUMMARY

Mesa Community College clearly demonstrates evidence that it meets Criterion 5, Engagement and Service, and its Core Components. The college mission documents speak to the importance of the many constituencies that comprise its community, and the college has enacted its mission and values through innumerable programs and services in mutually beneficial ways. MCC knows its constituencies and actively and continuously seeks to learn

from them in order to meet their changing expectations. The college engages its internal and external constituencies in many ways, both formal and informal – while upholding important traditions and testing new innovations. As plainly stated in the mission, “Our ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life in the community we serve.”

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Mesa Community College’s Center for Service Learning is devoted specifically to advancing student learning through service to and engagement in the community. Learning through service is also realized through a rich complement of student life and co- and extra-curricular activities. The value placed on community service is also enacted by faculty, staff and administrators who are engaged in countless community-based organizations and activities.

Mesa Community College has numerous long-standing and mutually beneficial partnerships and collaborations with the private sector, local municipalities, public schools, universities, and community-based organizations. The college is continually sought out by these partners as well as by new constituencies wishing to collaborate or to have access to college programs and services. MCC is perceived by internal constituencies and by community leaders and partners to be upholding its mission and values.

The President’s Commission on Excellence in Education is an active community advisory group with a record of providing advice as well as support for college initiatives. The development of the Red Mountain campus and the one-college, two-campus model is evidence of the Commission’s strong support and of the college’s eagerness to respond to community needs.

Mesa Community College is challenged to ensure that its many diverse constituencies have a fair and equal voice in college matters. The college cannot assume that what worked in the past will work in the future, or that the constituencies of the past will be the constituencies of the future. The college must be diligent and proactive in reaching out to the increasingly diverse community that seeks its services and programs. The college is challenged to anticipate, consider and meet the wide range of expectations that will come from its constituencies in the future. This will require setting and pursuing clear institutional priorities that are widely understood and consistent with the college mission.

Finally, the college’s partnership with the city of Mesa carries with it many expectations from various constituencies. With the passage of the 2004 bond referendum, MCC

Engagement and Service

Downtown will become a reality. The development of a coherent vision and programmatic focus for MCC's presence in downtown Mesa will be critical to its success.

Chapter 8

Federal Compliance

- Credits, Program Length and Tuition
- Compliance with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act
- Advertising and Recruitment Materials
- Records of Student Complaints



Chapter 8

Federal Compliance

- Credits, Program Length and Tuition
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- Records of Student Complaints



Mesa Community College has a solid history of operating with integrity in fiscal and legal matters. This is evidenced in part by the college's compliance with federal and state regulations as well as MCCCDC policies or guidelines. This section addresses institutional compliance with federal mandates.

HIGHER EDUCATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mesa Community College is in full compliance with all requirements of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 1998. (*See Resource Room: Financial Aid Documents.*) Documentation of the college's approval to participate in and comply with Title IV include the Program Participation Agreement (PPA), the Eligibility and Certification Renewal (ECAR), and the official cohort default rates for the past three years (2001, 2002, and 2003).

The college demonstrates compliance by completing the Program Participation Agreement (PPA) every five years, which signifies Mesa Community College's agreement with the rules and regulations associated with good stewardship of the federal aid programs. The last PPA was completed in 2001 and is scheduled to be updated in 2006. Mesa Community College operates the federal aid programs with integrity by using information about students and financial aid responsibly. This is evidenced by yearly completion of the Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate (FISAP). The FISAP is the approved federal vehicle the college uses to document previous year usage of funding received in Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant, and Federal Work Study.

The ability of MCC's Student Financial Services to administer federal aid programs appropriately was further demonstrated during the fall of 2003. At that time, the Student Financial Services office was instrumental in the identification and apprehension of a student allegedly misusing federal aid. The office was subsequently recognized by the United States Department of Education's Office of Inspector General for its dedication and support to Investigative Services, Region IX, during the apprehension of the alleged abuser of Title IV student aid.

Mesa Community College undergoes an audit of its Student Financial Services office each year by the State Office of the Auditor General. The most recent audit, conducted during fall 2003, did not reveal any negative findings. Results of the audit are available from the Maricopa County Community Colleges District Support Office. (*See Resource Room: Financial Aid State Audit.*) There have been no limitations, restrictions, or termination measures taken against any Title IV program at Mesa Community College. The college's Student Financial

Federal Compliance

Services office has not been audited by the Office of Inspector General of the United States Department of Education.

Mesa Community College's Student Financial Services office regularly monitors the college's student loan default rate. On average, for the most recent three-year period, the default rate for the Federal Family Educational Loan programs (FFELP) at MCC is 11.3% and the average default rate for the Perkins Loan Program is 30.6%. The office of Student Financial Services has implemented default management procedures to ensure the rate is within an acceptable range for all loan programs. Table 8-1 below illustrates default rates for the past three years.

Table 8-1

STUDENT LOAN DEFAULT RATES AT MCC FOR MOST RECENT THREE-YEAR PERIOD				
Loan Type	AY 2000	AY 2001	AY 2002	AY 2003
FFELP	12.7%	10.3%	11%	Not published
Perkins	---	22.5%	32%	37.29%

Institutional efforts to control student loan defaults include required loan entrance counseling for first-time borrowers. Loan entrance counseling is available online through a web based product provided by United Student Aid Funds, a Sallie Mae company. When the student completes the counseling session, the college is notified. The notation is posted to the student's financial aid record and the loan is processed. The college utilizes the National Student Loan Data System to track loan indebtedness of its federal aid applicants and notifies the students when the aggregate loan debt is close to or over the amount available per federal requirements.

The college makes every effort to meet with students who have previously borrowed a significant number of student loans to educate them about debt management and the consequences of default. In addition, disbursement of student loans is delayed to first-year, first-time borrowers by the required 30 days from the first date of the term. The college's financial aid packaging policy includes various components of default management such as: 1) student loans are packaged last and only if the student requests a loan; and 2) student loans are not packaged automatically for both a FFELP Loan and a Perkins Loan.

Two key areas paramount to ensuring compliance are recordkeeping and training. The office of Student Financial Services recently implemented a document imaging and retrieval system to capture key documents required for a student's financial aid record. The system

reduces the number of misfiled documents and provides the ability to view the student's record at both comprehensive campuses. This improves the financial aid process for students. In addition, staff members receive regular training through a series of internal college training opportunities as well as financial aid training workshops offered at the state and regional level.

As required by the Student Right to Know Act, other federally mandated Title IV reporting includes disclosure of campus crime and graduation rates for students, including student athletes.

DISCLOSURE OF CAMPUS CRIME AND GRADUATION RATES

Mesa Community College complies with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act (originally known as the Campus Security Act) by filing crime statistics annually with the U.S. Department of Education. Information on the Clery Act as well as crime statistics for all post-secondary institutions may be found on the MCC College Safety website. The MCC College Safety update is reported via email on a weekly basis and annual crime statistics are posted on the college website as well as on the Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) website for students titled, College Opportunities Online.

Mesa Community College complies with the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA) by completing an annual EADA report. (*See Resource Room: Athletics.*) The Maricopa District office of Institutional Effectiveness reports annual data for the District's 10 member colleges to the IPEDS administered by the National Center for Education Statistics. The EADA includes graduation rates for athletes and IPEDS includes graduation rates for the Student Right To Know Cohort. These are all available for students through the IPEDS website, College Opportunities Online.

CREDITS, PROGRAM LENGTH, AND TUITION

MCC operates on a semester schedule with fall and spring semesters each running 16 weeks. The majority of classes are identified as lab, lecture or a combination of lab and lecture. One credit is awarded for each fifty minutes a class meets per week. Day classes typically meet two, three or four times per week and evening classes meet one to two times a week. MCC also offers two 5-week summer sessions, one 8-week summer session, and a winter intersession that is scheduled between the fall and spring semesters. Late-start and short-term classes are available in a variety of lengths and at different start times, but all maintain the same class time per credit hour. In addition, MCC has more than 120 online classes.

Federal Compliance

All classes are assigned credit with the majority of one-semester classes averaging three credits. Students may earn Certificates of Completion or Associate degrees based upon completed requirements. All degree programs include general education core requirements. In addition to the general education core each degree program has its own set of course requirements. Most Associate degrees require a minimum of 60 credit hours, depending upon the specific program of study.

Tuition is charged based upon residency of the student: in county, out-of-county, and out-of-state. All credit classes are charged the same per semester credit hour tuition rate. Out-of-county and out-of-state students are charged a higher tuition rate than in-county students; these students have a different tuition structure based upon the number of credits they take. Tuition rates are subject to change but are prominently published in the college catalog, class schedule, and on the college website. In addition to the per credit hour tuition all students are subject to a \$5 registration fee per semester. Most laboratory classes carry an additional lab fee. MCC participates in the Western Undergraduate Exchange Program which is sponsored by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). This program allows students from participating states to attend MCC and pay 150% of the resident tuition rate.

VISITS TO OFF-CAMPUS LOCATIONS

Mesa Community College provides an array of educational opportunities at a number of different locations. By providing multiple sites for instruction the college is able to realize its strategic goal of “Access.” Expanding access allows MCC to better serve the educational needs of the community. (*See Resource Room: Strategic Plan: 2004-2007.*)

Mesa Community College is comprised of two full-service campuses, an Extended Campus and a number of in-state course locations. These are noted in the Annual Institutional Data Update, last submitted to the Higher Learning Commission in July 2004. Both MCC at Southern and Dobson and MCC at Red Mountain are comprehensive campuses. However, because Mesa Community College operates within a “one college, two campus” model, the campuses share the student information system. This allows students to apply, register and pay fees at either of the two locations, but the transactions are processed via one seamless data system.

MCC Extended Campus includes Tempe High School, Downtown Center/Centennial Way, Downtown Center/Country Club & Brown, Williams Campus, and MCC/Boswell Sunhealth Partnership. In addition, the college offers coursework at a number of

community-based locations. All student admissions, registration, financial aid, as well as tuition and fee payments for these locations, are handled at one of the two comprehensive campuses and processed through MCC's shared student information system. Thus, none of these MCC sites meet federal requirements to be a stand-alone site.

ADVERTISING AND RECRUITING MATERIALS

Mesa Community College accurately reports its affiliation status with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) in all major college documents and publications, including reference to the HLC website and phone number. For example, the current MCC Catalog states the following:

Mesa Community College is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and a member of the North Central Association. Website: www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org
Phone: (312) 263-0456

Other examples of marketing materials referencing accredited status include the class schedules and an October 2004 newspaper advertorial. HLC affiliation is also printed in numerous college publications such as Fast Facts 04-05, Faculty Handbook, Adjunct Faculty Handbook, and the Strategic Plan.

MCC also prominently publishes college contact information in all pertinent documents, recruitment materials and on the college website. Examples include the class schedules, catalog, college recruitment brochures or postcards, and print, radio and television advertisements.

RECORD OF STUDENT COMPLAINTS

MCC records and responds to student complaints following defined and published policies and guidelines. Procedures for filing, recording and resolving both instructional and non-instructional student complaints are outlined in the student handbook. (*See Resource Room: Student Handbook 2004-2005.*) All complaints resulting from academic process issues are resolved through the faculty member, department chairperson and instructional deans as outlined in the student handbook. The description addresses initial steps, timelines, and resolution processes. The appropriate associate dean of instruction maintains a log of all written complaints in their discipline and how they were resolved.

Non-instructional complaints, including discrimination and sexual harassment issues, are forwarded to the Dean of Student Services (or designee) for resolution; this process is also

Federal Compliance

clearly outlined in the student handbook and the MCCCCD Administrative Regulations. An associate dean of student services at the Southern and Dobson campus and the Red Mountain campus have been designated by the Dean of Student Services. Each associate dean follows procedures and protocols associated with issues resulting from non-instructional complaints. The appropriate associate dean of student services maintains a log of all written complaints and documentation of resolutions and sanctions imposed from their designated campus.

SUMMARY

Mesa Community College complies with all federal compliance requirements. The college recognizes that compliance to stated requirements and exemplary execution of related responsibilities or processes is essential to the integrity of the institution.

Chapter 9

Summary and Request for
Continued Accreditation



Chapter 9

Summary and Request for
Continued Accreditation



Mesa Community College demonstrates, and has documented through a rigorous self-study process consonant with the expectations of the Higher Learning Commission, that it fulfills the criteria for accreditation. The college presents evidence throughout this report that it carries out its mission and actualizes its values of learning, excellence, inclusiveness and community.

MCC operates with integrity and is a careful steward of public monies. The college plans for the future through a systematic, dynamic and participatory planning process and allocates resources in accordance with those plans. The college's commitment to effective teaching and learning is strongly stated in its mission, and that commitment is manifested in a multitude of ways throughout college programs and services. Scholarship and the acquisition and responsible use of knowledge are encouraged and recognized, particularly through the scholarship of teaching and learning. Finally, MCC takes its role in the community seriously; the college actively seeks out and engages with community constituencies and responds proactively to community needs and expectations.

The self-study process was conducted in a thoughtful manner and provided MCC with an opportunity for reflection. The goals of the self study were pursued diligently and have been achieved, allowing members of the college community to document its strengths and challenges and to better position the college for the future. These strengths and challenges are articulated in the self-study report. Moreover, members of the entire college community had unique opportunities to collaborate and work together for the common good of the college.

Mesa Community College respectfully requests continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission, a Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, for a period of ten years.

Chapter 10

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms



AA	Associate in Arts Degree.
AAEE	Associate in Arts: Elementary Education Degree.
AAS	Associate in Applied Science Degree.
ABUS	Associate in Business Degree.
ACCAC	Arizona Community College Athletic Conference.
ACE	Achieving a College Education: A program of Maricopa County Community College District.
AGEC	Arizona General Education Core: A statewide 35-credit general education program of study that fulfills lower division general education degree requirements for students planning to transfer to any Arizona public community college or university.
AGEC – A	Arizona General Education Core corresponding to the Associate in Arts.
AGEC – B	Arizona General Education Core corresponding to the Associate in Business.
AGEC – S	Arizona General Education Core corresponding to the Associate in Science.
AGS	Associate in General Studies Degree.
AS	Associate in Science Degree.
ASMCC	Associated Students of Mesa Community College.

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

ASSET/COMPASS	Placement tests to ensure proper placement in reading, writing, and mathematics. Asset is in paper form. COMPASS is the computerized version.
ATP	Articulated Transfer Partnership: A transfer degree articulated between the Maricopa District and a specific program at a specific university.
Academic Skills Center	A lab designed specifically to meet the needs of students enrolled in below-100 level courses in English, Reading, and English-as-a-Second-Language.
Adjunct Faculty Handbook	An MCC publication which addresses academic policies and practices and describes college services that support teaching and learning for adjunct faculty.
Admission and Standards Committee	An MCC committee which reviews admission policies, procedures, and academic standards.
American Indian Center	An MCC campus center for support of Native American students.
Assessment Week	A specific week designated each year for administration of college-wide student assessment.
Auxiliary Fund (Fund 2)	The budgetary fund for self-supporting enterprises.
B & II	Business and Industry Institute.
Blue Book: An Essential Guide for Maricopans	A district publication which addresses standards and policies applicable to all MCCCCD employees.

CAFÉ	Colloquy for Adjunct Faculty Experience: A faculty orientation program for adjunct faculty.
Career Success Center	A center of support for students' career choices and pursuit.
CDAC	Capital Development Advisory Council: An MCCCCD council.
CEC	Chancellor's Executive Council.
Center for Community Education	An MCC center responsible for non-credit course offerings to meet special community needs.
Center for Global Tolerance and Engagement	An organization formed by the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies to help foster global tolerance and engagement.
Chair Academy for Leadership and Development	A national center for leadership development and training housed at MCC.
Changing Demographics Project	A project to review the demographic changes in the community and related educational needs.
Commission on Excellence in Education	An MCC community advisory group with a general membership of 800 and an executive council of 55.
CPP	Center for Public Policy: An MCC center which serves as a community resource to address policy issues of concern to the college and its constituencies.
CSL	Center for Service Learning: An MCC center whose mission is to promote excellence in teaching and learning through the integration of academic study with active service.

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

CTL	Center for Teaching and Learning: An MCC center for teaching support and professional development for all employees.
Curriculum Committee	MCC College Curriculum Committee comprised of faculty and department chairs and chaired by the Dean of Instruction.
DAC	District Diversity Advisory Council.
District Curriculum Committee	A district committee comprised of two voting members from each college, the Dean of Instruction and the faculty representative.
District Diversity Infusion Program	A district program focused on ensuring diversity in the curriculum.
DLMG	Distance Learning Mentoring Group: A group housed in the Center for Teaching and Learning which provides a support system for faculty wishing to develop distance learning courses and instructional approaches.
EADA	Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act.
East Valley Think Tank	A group of educational leaders representing pre-K through University institutions throughout the East Valley geographic area.
ECAR	Eligibility and certification renewal documentation for the Higher Education Reauthorization Act.
EDP	Educational Development Projects: Grants which provide summer funding for faculty to develop additional teaching materials for courses.

Enfermeras en Escalera	Nurses on a Ladder: A fast-track program for foreign-educated nurses seeking licensure as registered nurses in the United States.
ESL	English-as-a-Second-Language.
ESL Student Services Center	An Enrollment Services Center for non-English speaking students.
Extended Campus	The designation for all off campus credit offerings as well as the five-week winter intersession and dual enrollment programs.
FAC	District Financial Advisory Council.
Faculty Executive Council	The District faculty governance council.
Faculty Staffing Committee	An MCC faculty committee which reviews staffing requests and makes recommendations to the President.
Fast Facts	A publication of the Office of Research and Planning that describes the college.
FEP	Faculty Evaluation Plan: The evaluation tool for residential faculty members.
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act: Guidelines concerning the release of individual information.
FFELP	Federal Family Educational Loan Program.
FIPP	Faculty in Progress Program: A district-sponsored initiative designed to develop a pool of qualified faculty applicants from under-represented groups.

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

FISAP	Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate: The approved federal vehicle for documentation of previous year usage of funding received in Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant, and Federal Work Study.
Focus on Effectiveness	A publication that provides an overview of effectiveness indicators for the college.
Focus on Learning: Strategic Plan 2004-2007	MCC's most recent strategic plan.
FPG	Faculty professional growth opportunities for residential and adjunct faculty.
FTSE	Full-time student equivalent.
General Education Outcomes	Explicit student learning outcomes that are interdisciplinary and above the course level.
General Fund (Fund 1)	The main operating budget fund for MCCCCD colleges.
Global Citizenship	An interdisciplinary academic certificate.
Graduation Exit Survey	An online survey completed by graduating students.
HR	Human Resources Department.
IA	Office of Institutional Advancement.
IC	Instructional Council: District wide curriculum councils composed of faculty representatives from each college in the Maricopa District for each discipline or prefix.

IE	International Education Department.
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System: Administered by the National Center for Education Statistics.
ITS	Information Technology Services.
Innovative Projects	College grants which provide an opportunity for all employee groups to develop creative programs that benefit the college and students.
Kaleidoscope Project	An MCC program which provides faculty with reassigned course loads to develop and work on self-defined academic projects.
Learning Resource Center	A term used synonymously with library.
LEC	Learning Enhancement Center: An MCC department which provides college-wide tutoring services.
Maricopa District Governing Board	The governing board for the 10 colleges within MCCCDC.
MAT	Management, Administration, and Technology employee group.
MCC	Mesa Community College.
MCCCDC	Maricopa County Community College District.
MCLI	Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction: The Maricopa District's faculty development and academic support office.

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Mesa Community Roundtable	A roundtable group comprised of senior leadership from Mesa local government, schools, colleges, and businesses.
Mesa Minority and Small Business Center	A program based at MCC which encourages entrepreneurship.
MIL	Maricopa Institute for Learning: A district year-long fellowship program to encourage the scholarship of teaching and learning.
M & O	Maintenance and Operations.
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding.
Multi-use Lab	The computer lab under the direction of the MCC Business Department.
MyMCC	A portal which is an integrated workspace that provides faculty, students, and staff with the tools needed to communicate electronically and access web-based instructional materials and applications.
New Frontiers	New Frontiers for Learning in Retirement: Programs offered through the Center for Community Education Office of Senior Adult Programs.
Network Academy	An academy offering coursework leading to MCC degree and certificate programs in rapidly emerging information technology fields.
New Employee Orientation Program	A program originated by the Center for Teaching and Learning to acculturate newly hired individuals to MCC college life.

NCLEX	National Council of State Boards of Nursing Examination.
NFE	New Faculty Experience: A year-long professional development program through the Center for Teaching and Learning for new full-time faculty.
NJCAA	National Junior College Athletic Association.
Office of Employee and Organizational Development	A District Office which offers year-round training opportunities for all employees of the District.
ORP	MCC Office of Research and Planning.
OSHA Compliance Team	A district group which supports college compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.
PIRC Lab	The Psychology Instructional Resource Center in the Psychology Department.
Plant Fund (Fund 7)	Funding accounts for capital expenditures for new construction, building upgrades, and renovation and capital equipment.
PPA	Program Participation Agreement: An agreement which signifies MCC's agreement with the rules and regulations associated with good stewardship of federal aid programs.
President's Leadership Team	A team comprised of administrators from all college units and employee group leaders.
Professional Growth Funds	Support funds for professional development for all employee groups.

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Program Advisory Councils	Advisory councils to MCC programs which include representation from workforce representatives and employees.
Program Review	The review process for career and technical programs.
PSA	Professional Staff Association.
Public Access Defibrillation Program	A District program which provides automated external defibrillators and training in their use.
REACH	Raising Expectations for Achievement and Community Service through Higher Education: A scholarship-based program designed to improve access to higher education for high school students who might not otherwise attend college.
Residential Faculty	Full-time, permanent, board approved faculty members.
Residential Faculty Handbook	An MCC publication which addresses academic policies and practices and describes college services that support teaching and learning.
Restricted Fund (Fund 3)	Funds including student financial aid and grants.
RFP	Residential Faculty Policy.
ROC	Results Outreach Committee: A subcommittee of the Student Outcomes Committee (SOC) charged with exploring avenues for strengthening and formalizing the use of assessment results throughout the college.
SACE	Student Assessment of the College Environment: A college-wide survey of student satisfaction.

SPAC	District Strategic Planning Advisory Council.
SOC	Student Outcomes Committee: A faculty senate committee charged with oversight of the college-wide student outcomes assessment program.
Strategic Conversation	An open forum held each semester on issues related to the college's mission.
Strategic Planning Committee	An MCC committee comprised of individuals representing all employee groups and administrative areas of the college.
Teaching Circles	An MCC initiative coordinated through the CTL which engages MCC's Maricopa Institute for Learning Scholars in discussions on the scholarship of teaching and learning.
Tech Connect	An electronic publication which provides updates on college-wide technology topics.
Technology Support Services	MCC support of technology function including help desk assistance.
Technology Training Services	A district program responsible for providing training and development opportunities district wide for employees to upgrade their technology skills.
TLTR	Teaching Learning Technology Roundtable: A forum for faculty and staff to discuss how technology can be used most effectively to support student learning.
Transfer Services	An advising center for transfer articulation.

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

VOIP	Voice Over Internet Protocol.
WICHE	Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.
Workplace Skills	A specific set of student learning outcomes for career and technical programs.
Writing Center	A center providing professional English tutors to assist students in developing writing skills.