

**ASSURANCE SECTION**

**Section Two:  
REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE VISIT**

**to**

**MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
Mesa, Arizona  
March 7-9, 2005**

**for**

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

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## ASSURANCE SECTION

### I. Context and Nature of Visit

#### A. Purpose of Visit:

A team of eight members conducted a three day visit (7-9 March, 2005) to Mesa Community College for the purpose of comprehensive evaluation. Charged with serving the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher learning, the team validated the information gathered and analyzed by the institution in order to assure quality. The team members also offered consultative advice to the institution in the spirit of advancing the quality of higher learning.

#### B. Organizational Context:

Mesa Community College is the largest of the ten colleges and two skill centers in the Maricopa County Community College District of Maricopa County. The geographic area includes both the city of Phoenix and the surrounding metro area; the demographics indicate that there are now more than three million residents and a population that continues to grow in size. Mesa Community College, like the other colleges in the district, is separately accredited. The primary service area is in the "East Valley" which includes all of the city of Mesa, most of Tempe, as well as parts of Chandler and Gilbert. There are approximately 850,000 residents in the service area of the College. Mesa is a comprehensive community college with over 130 academic, career and certificate programs for credit together with a wide array of community and continuing education offerings throughout the community as well as on the campuses.

#### C. Unique Aspects of Visit:

The visit was among the first conducted using the new criteria for the PEAQ process as well as the new team report format. The institution also conducted its self study and prepared its documents using the new criteria.

#### D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited:

Mesa Community College is a single college with two comprehensive campuses. The main campus is located at Southern Avenue and Dobson Road, on the western border of Mesa, a suburb of Phoenix. The smaller Red Mountain campus is located fourteen miles northeast of the main campus in northeast Mesa. In addition, there is a Downtown Center which is home to the Network Academy and the site of other course offerings. One indicator of the College's engagement with the community is the existence of more than forty different sites throughout the area where classes, courses, and clinicals are provided.

#### E. Distance Education Reviewed:

The subject of distance education is addressed at length in the Advancement Section of this report. There are currently 120 classes available on-line. Early in the self-study process, a committee was formed to examine the College's readiness to request an institutional change to offer online degree(s). The committee recommended postponing the request until a later date and the College asked that distance education be addressed in a consultative manner.

**F. Interactions with Institutional Constituencies:**

1. Self-Study Steering Committee
2. Governing Board and Chancellor/President, VP's, Self-Study Coordinator, Director of ORP
2. Curriculum Committee for MCC
3. Student Representatives
4. Commission on Excellence (representatives) (30)
5. Business and Industry Institute Advisory Committee and Staff/Downtown Center (12)
6. Red Mountain Community Advisory Committee (11)
7. Students—Open Forum (24)
8. Faculty—Open Forum
9. Staff (Management, Administration and Technology—MAT Group)—Open Forum (27)
10. Staff (Maintenance and Operations, Crafts, Public Safety, PSA Employee Group)—Open Forum (40)
11. Student Outcomes Committee/Results Outreach Committees (17)
12. Alumni
13. District Financial Advisory Committee
14. District Curriculum Committee
15. Red Mountain Campus Employees—Open Forum (34)
16. Distance Learning Committee (7)
17. Deans (5)
18. Caterpillar Corporation/Human Resources Director (1)
19. Alumni Advisory Board (1)
20. Department Chairs (18)

and numerous small groups as well as individuals in tours and conversations at both campuses, the downtown center, the Williams Campus for Mortuary Science, and others.

**G: Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed:**

1. Program/Department Notebooks in Resource Room
2. Surveys of District Residents and Employees
3. Distance Learning Materials
4. Records of Interviews with Department Chairs, Directors, and Managers
5. Community Leaders and Partners Survey
6. Commission on Excellence Annual Reports
7. Strategic Conversations Results (Governing Board Strategic Conversations)
8. Annual Student Assessment Reports
9. Institutional Effectiveness Documents (enrollment data, grade distribution reports, completion reports, graduate exit surveys, SACE survey, transfer data)
10. Program Evaluation Documents
11. Reports and Evaluations of Service Learning Initiative
12. Program Review Handbook and Program Review Reports 2002-2003; 2003-2004
13. Student Learning Outcomes Documents
14. Departmental Plans for Instruction
15. Commission on Excellence Annual Reports

16. 2004 Focus on Effectiveness Report
17. Strategic Planning Handbook
18. Environmental Scanning Results
19. MCCCDC Financial Plans and Annual Reports for the Higher Learning Commission
20. Capital Allocation Summaries
21. Student Computer Use Survey
22. Distance Learning Student Survey
23. Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, 2004; 2003
24. Student Handbook
25. Resident Faculty Handbook
26. Adjunct Faculty Handbook
27. Catalog of Courses (2004-2005)
28. Strategic Planning Handbook
29. Faculty Survey Instrument and Results
30. Non-Faculty Employee Survey Instrument and Results
31. MCC Community Survey Instrument and Results
32. Institutional Research Reports
33. Class Schedules
34. Policy Manuals (MCCCDC Governance Policies)
35. Results of Facilitated Discussion Groups (Deans, Faculty, Commission on Excellence, Student Leadership, Professional Staff Association, Maintenance and Operations and Crafts Staff)
36. President's Communiqués
37. Focus on Effectiveness Report
38. ASSET Reports
39. Operational Planning Documents
40. Affirmative Action Committee Reports
41. Committee Membership Handbook 2004-2005
42. MCC Safety and Emergency Procedures
43. Contractual Agreements
44. Focus on Learning: Strategic Plan 2004-2007
45. MCC Strategic Plan 1998-2001
46. MCC Master Plan 2002-2022
47. Facilities Master Planning Assumptions
48. Faculty Recognitions Summary
49. MCC Procedures for Faculty Evaluation
50. Learning Enhancement Center End of Semester Reports and Survey
51. MCCDC Employee Resource Guide and Employee Professional Development
52. The Blue Book: All MCCDC Employee Manual
53. Employee and Organizational Development Year End Report 2002-2003
54. Statements of Vision, Mission, and Values
55. Mesa Public Schools Student Demographics Report
56. Various web sites and hot links through Maricopa District and Mesa Community College Portals ( )

## II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

### A. Comprehensiveness of Self-Study Process:

The structure and scope of the self-study process is described in Chapter 2 (23-29) of the Self-Study Report. The College built both its process and the resulting documents around the values that guide its practice: learning, inclusiveness, excellence, and community. Acknowledging that it is these values that make MCC distinctive, there is clear response to the cross-cutting themes embraced by the Higher Learning Commission: future-oriented; learning-focused; connected; and distinctive. The process also stipulated five clear goals, examined the many dimensions of the organization, was an integral part of institutional visioning and planning processes, involved a wide variety of constituencies in the College and in the community, drew on the expertise of many individuals, permeated the culture of the organization, had strong and consistent support from the leaders of the College who encouraged and inspired the engagement of stakeholders, responded effectively to recommendations resulting from previous peer reviews, and produced a report that was analytical, evaluative and built on evidence clearly defined (Self-Study Report, 2). It was abundantly clear to the visiting team that the self-study process and the report it produced were the work of the entire college community.

### B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report:

Mesa Community College's Self-Study Report describes, documents, analyzes and evaluates the state of the college in the present and accurately assesses its capacity for the future. Everything the team learned on the visit comports with the College's own findings as reported in the Self Study 2005. The College's summary is an adequate and accurate indicator of the integrity and significance of the process and product of self-study: "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 . . . and many have noted how much they learned. . . . 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" (30). The visiting team found that Mesa Community College's Self Study Report reflects all of the hallmarks of effective self-study reports as stipulated in 5.2-6 of the Handbook for Accreditation.

### C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges:

The team considers the response of the organization to previously identified challenges to be adequate. Their response to these challenges is summarized in the Self-Study Report, 11-21. The team's conversations throughout the visit validated the College's progress as reported.

### D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third Party Comment:

A memo from the HLC Assistant Director for Legal and Governmental Affairs dated 25 February 2005 stated that "the Commission has received no third party comments regarding the College prior to its comprehensive evaluation." During the visit, the team confirmed that the College appropriately solicited third party comment and learned how the College has processes in place that enable it to hear from its constituencies.

Requirements were fulfilled.

## III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The team reviewed the required Title IV Compliance areas and the student complaint information. Chapter 8 of the 2005 Self-Study Report addresses Mesa Community College's compliance not only with federal requirements but also with state regulations and district policies and guidelines. The College documents its full compliance with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 1998 as evidenced in its Program Participation Agreement (PPA), its Eligibility and Certification Renewal (ECAR), and its Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate (FISAP). The College reports on its effective stewardship of financial aid resources and its implementation of default management procedures to control student loan defaults.

Mesa Community College demonstrates its compliance with other Title IV mandates by an annual filing of campus crime statistics as required by the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act. The MCC College Safety website is updated on a weekly basis and submitted annually through the Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System (IPEDS). In addition, the College files an annual Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA) report which includes graduation rates for athletes. All of these reports are available on the College Opportunities Online website. The Self-Study Report states that "Mesa Community College has a solid history of operating with integrity in fiscal and legal matters. . . . MCC complies with all federal compliance requirements. The college recognizes that compliance with stated requirements and exemplary execution of related responsibilities or processes is essential to the integrity of the institution" (183;188).

#### **IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA**

##### **A. CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY**

**The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.**

###### **1. Evidence that demonstrates core components are met:**

Mesa Community College's statements of vision, mission, and values appear consistently in the public documents of the institution and clearly articulate the commitments of the institution; the statements are also displayed in framed statements on the walls of classrooms and offices on the campuses. Most importantly, the mission, vision, and values are spoken, understood, and lived by the board, administration, faculty, staff and students and echoed also by members of the communities served by the College. From its review of materials and throughout all aspects of the on-site visit, the team confirms that Mesa Community College is a mission-driven, vision-inspired, and values-led institution.

The wording of the mission statement affirms MCC's pursuit of "excellence in teaching and learning, preparing individuals for active citizenship in a diverse, global society." In all aspects of carrying out its mission--apparent in its academic programs, student support services, and engagement and partnerships with its varying communities—local as well as national and global, that Mesa Community College is guided by its commitment to its core value of inclusiveness. MCC carries lives out in its works what it promises in its mission documents.

There is a clear congruence of the mission and goals of MCC as a whole, as well as of its administrative and academic subunits with the goals of the district as evidenced in the planning documents reviewed by the team. At all levels, planning is mission-driven and strategic priorities

drive decision-making in budget preparation and implementation. The mission is comprehensively disseminated and evidently comprehensively understood.

Mesa Community College's organizational structure and culture values multiple voices and uses comprehensive methods of communication and collaboration in planning and decision-making. Individuals at all levels share responsibility for the carrying out of the mission including the relevance and coherence of the curriculum, the integrity of academic and other operational processes, and the development and implementation of policies and practices. The institution's documented commitment to both assessment of student learning and to institutional effectiveness provides mechanisms for continuous improvement in the carrying out of the College's mission.

**2. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components needs organizational attention.**

None.

**3. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components requires Commission follow-up.**

None.

**4. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components is not met and requires Commission follow-up.**

None.

**Recommendation of the Team:** Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

**B. CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE**

**The organization'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.**

**1. Evidence that demonstrates core components are met:**

Mesa Community College's planning is driven by its mission and vision and guided by its values. Planning is on-going and pervasive, incorporating the results of assessment. Budgeting is clearly linked to planning. Communication of priorities is college-wide and well understood.

The College's plans are appropriately aligned with the plans of the District. Based on interviews and supporting documents, MCC is committed to the planning process at all levels of the organization. The plan is clearly designed to fulfill the College mission and improve the quality of learning.

The organization's planning documents reflect the use of Morrison's STEEP external factors in developing the environmental scan. The results indicate that the future of MCC will be affected primarily by 1) the future directions taken by Arizona State University directions; 2) specific curriculum and program changes; 3) demographic factors related to enrollment, especially in downtown Mesa and the growing Hispanic community with demands on infrastructure, cost of health insurance, and tuition increases. The College regularly examines internal trends through the scanning process. It is evident that the College is realistically planning for the future.

Of the ten colleges in the Maricopa Community College District, Mesa Community College is one

of three colleges that contributes revenues to support the district. This reality is documented in the MCC annual financial records and in comments of support from the Chancellor. The solid financial base is accomplished through budget planning and allocation in which each expenditure is tied back to MCC's strategic goals.

The resources of the College are currently adequate; however, the College recognizes that enrollment growth will create new challenges. The MCCC Financial Plan acknowledges that "to meet the needs of enrollment growth. . . . would require a 60% growth of the campus just to provide sufficient classrooms and offices." The Strategic and Operational Planning Committees express a well-founded confidence that the planning processes in place at both College and District levels will enable the College and District to respond to future growth.

Plans for resource development demonstrate a commitment to supporting the mission of the College and its vision for the future. Instruction receives the lion's share of the budget resources and faculty positions are allotted at the District level based on enrollment. The College's ample resource base, coupled with the enviable ability to gain the support of constituents in referenda and through partnerships demonstrates that the College is well positioned to sustain present and projected growth.

The Office of Research and Planning (ORP) provides ongoing reports related to the assessment plan, including program review. The ORP supports both formal and informal opportunities for analyzing and interpreting these reports with the faculty and administration, including an annual session with stakeholders at which results are shared and discussed. The ORP is focused on effectively supporting the assessment efforts of the College by designing, reporting, and participating in the analysis of relevant data used for continuous improvement. The Student Assessment of the College Environment (SACE) is a good example of a survey used to identify areas of both strength and deficiency. A clear indicator of the utility of such surveys is the College's response to SACE results as a catalyst to implement changes in the advising system that directly address the concerns voiced by the students.

There is a systematic method for review of academic programs every four years; in addition, Specific elements of learning outcomes for general education are subject to annual review on a rotating basis. The results of each review are analyzed at the appropriate levels and changes and improvements are made based on those results—documented in the self-study and verified by the visiting team in conversations with faculty and staff. There is sufficient evidence that ongoing program and learning outcomes review is being incorporated into College planning and budgeting as well as into ongoing efforts for institutional and program-level improvement.

Since the previous comprehensive visit, the College has organized and staffed an Office of Research and Planning that provides a high level of support for the assessment of student learning and the institutional effectiveness initiatives, as well as the College's strategic planning efforts. The academic vice president has worked with the faculty and staff in assessment and planning. The ORP is an effective and respected department at the College, operating with minimum staffing given the expectations and realities of the assessment and planning efforts. The creation of two assessment committees and funding for the activities provides evidence of administrative support for assessment.

**2. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components needs organizational attention.**

While there is a great deal of evidence and awareness of planning for expansion of programming and facilities to serve the needs of a growing and changing population, the challenge of growth requires more specific attention to a comprehensive staffing plan for non-instructional personnel, as well as conscious and intentional succession planning to ensure the continuation of effective leadership for the entire College.

Planning for expansion of facilities, adequate staffing in the non-instructional area to accommodate the projected growth in both facilities and students, has been recognized as a need both by the personnel at the College and the members of the visiting team. The institution-wide involvement in the self-study process created an energy and camaraderie which the College can continue and weave into future planning processes.

Mesa Community College uses its institutional data in a variety of ways that promote collaborative review and analysis. In addition to the review of academic programs and student learning outcomes, Mesa conducts other services and program reviews and surveys to determine whether the entire college community is serving its students and other constituencies as effectively as possible. Although Mesa has made much progress in developing a holistic plan for institutional review, there are some areas in which investigation could prove helpful, e.g. more evaluation of the effectiveness and staffing patterns in its Student Services operation.

**3. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components requires Commission follow-up.**

None

**4. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components is not met and requires Commission follow-up.**

None

**Recommendation of the Team:** Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

**C. CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING**

**The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.**

**1. Evidence that demonstrates core components are met:**

Mesa Community College is all about learning—which it values explicitly for students, employees, and the diverse and growing, changing communities it serves. MCC epitomizes the learning-focused organization. The commitment to and care about student learning is apparent everywhere. The College’s “Show Me the Learning” effort is embraced by students, alumni, and community members who express consistently awareness and appreciation of the gift of great teaching.

MCC regularly evaluates the use of its learning resources to enhance student learning and effective teaching. Similar services are offered on both campuses either via the web and/or customized for the specific site. The largest growth in the use of services has been at the Red Mountain Campus—which is where the population of the area is growing exponentially. As reported by the Learning Enhancement Center, over 50% of students learn about services available through contacts with faculty. Evidence based on surveys, tours, and interviews indicates that the College is committed to and focused on supporting student learning and effective teaching.

The College's processes encourage partnerships and innovations that enhance student learning and strengthen teaching effectiveness. For example, the library supports not only students and employees at the College but also addresses the learning needs of the community in general. The space that was occupied by the old library was converted into a learning mall with a cyber café that incorporates music played by students in related programs.

Faculty members acknowledge enthusiastically the encouragement for innovation and support for their own continuous learning. The resources of the College—human, physical, and financial—are used to create environments that in every way support teaching and learning for all. The new Elsner Library, the Red Mountain Campus, the Business and Industry Institute downtown are outstanding examples of the investment of the college in its educational mission.

A comprehensive student development program supports learning on both the Southern and Dobson and the Red Mountain Campuses. The Southern and Dobson Campus provides the traditional student services programs as well as intercollegiate athletics, performing arts programs, the Office of Multicultural Services, the American Indian Center and the ESL One Stop Center. The Red Mountain Campus supports a full array of support programs located in a one-stop center that includes admissions, testing, advisement, registration, and financial aid as well as student activities and cultural offerings designed to enhance learning for students.

Mesa Community College has created and sustains an environment that provides understanding and supports the needs of a diverse and changing community and student body. The Office of Multicultural Services, the American Indian Center, the Center for Global Tolerance and Engagement, the ESL Student Services Center, the International Education Office, and the Office of Disability Resources are examples of the wide range of services designed to meet the specific needs of a variety of student groups. The adaptive laboratory for Special Services for the Disabled offers adaptive equipment and assistance to support the pursuit of learning for this population.

The learning environment is enhanced through the use of technologies in instruction as well as support services. Classroom learning is enhanced by WebCT, a course management system; MyMCCPortal enables faculty and students to communicate through email. Advising via effective, individualized electronic communication is available to support student choice and success. Input by faculty and staff into technology systems and solutions is sought through the Teaching, Learning, Technology Roundtable.

Faculty and staff are provided opportunities to learn about new technologies and pedagogy through the services offered through the Center for Teaching and Learning. The Center is well-funded, provides experimental classrooms for faculty. Faculty, staff, students, and community members are invited and encouraged to be involved in the planning, decision-making, and designing of spaces for learning and gathering.

The MCC approach to assessment of student learning includes strategies that encompass learning at the course, program and degree levels. Using both direct and indirect measures of student learning, the designers of the assessment plan demonstrate an understanding that multiple measures, many of them indirect, help to flesh out a more comprehensive picture of everyone at the institution contributes to student learning. A unique feature at MCC is the annual Assessment Week for students. Students are assessed for both general education and workplace skills outcomes; they are made aware of how their participation in the assessment processes of the College contributes to improving programs and services. For example, results are made available to students so that they are aware of how many students passed certification examinations for each of the career and technical programs.

One hallmark of a mature assessment initiative is the systematic use of assessment results to make changes and improvements at the course and department level and at the institutional level through college-wide planning. The Office of Research and Planning works closely with the Student Outcomes Committee (SOC) and the Results Outreach Committee (ROC) to identify appropriate uses for the assessment findings. The recent adoption of a “request for proposal” approach to allow faculty creativity to respond to assessment challenges represents the continuing maturation of the institution’s assessment processes.

An important dimension of a successful assessment plan is that it is faculty-created and faculty-driven. Mesa Community College faculty participate in the development of learning outcomes at the department and program level and in interdisciplinary clusters that are associated with the general education learning outcomes. Evidence of faculty responsiveness to assessment data abound in the numerous examples of program and across-the-curriculum changes that were cited in various interviews and meetings with the faculty during the on-site visit.

- 2. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components needs organizational attention.**
- 3. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components requires Commission follow-up.**  
None
- 4. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components is not met and requires Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**  
None

**Recommendation of the Team:** Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

#### **D. CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE**

**The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, social responsibility, in ways consistent with its mission.**

- 1. Evidence that demonstrates core components are met:**

In addition to valuing effective teaching and high academic standards, Mesa Community College promotes and supports learning and scholarship for students, employees, and community. One of the most distinctive and outstanding characteristics of the College is its widespread and intentional commitment to scholarship and intellectual inquiry. Faculty are actively engaged in discipline-based inquiry, as well as in the scholarship of teaching. Students also have many opportunities to be involved in research. An extensive program of assessment of general education has shaped a curriculum designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills essential for living and learning in a rapidly changing and increasingly diverse world.

The College's statements of mission, vision and values emphasize the importance of developing in students the skills necessary to succeed in a changing society. MCC incorporates Student Learning Outcomes for the Workplace into its curriculum and graduation requirements that include skills and abilities in ethics, interpersonal relationships, critical thinking, organization, teamwork, technology literacy and personal and professional responsibilities. The curricula designed to ensure student learning in these areas are designed by interdisciplinary groups of faculty in the career and technical programs and are validated by employers in the health care professions, mortuary science, fire science, information technology, and others. In addition, pass rates on certification exams consistently evidence that students are gaining the required skills and knowledge in their fields.

The College ensures that faculty, students and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly by the development and implementation of policies, procedures, standards, and guidelines. These responsibilities are clearly delineated in the College Catalog, Student Handbook, Residential and Adjunct Faculty Handbooks and Governing Board Policy Manual which demonstrate the College's commitment and expectations for its various constituent groups.

An array of college, community, national, and global opportunities support both curricular and co-curricular learning. Internships, lectures, field trips, service learning, cultural activities, clubs, foreign study and exchanges, national and international partnerships are open to students, staff, faculty and community members. Examples of such activities include the public policy forums, Americorps, and study abroad and service learning programs promote learning about diversity, globalism, and social responsibility.

Social responsibility is promoted both in and outside of the classrooms at Mesa Community College. The College's outstanding Service Learning Program has been incorporated into many courses and provides students with enhanced learning opportunities together with the ability to connect their learning with and use it to serve the needs of the community. The pervasive service learning opportunities integrated across the curriculum ensure that the College works toward its acknowledged ultimate purpose: "to improve the quality of life in the community we serve."

Mesa Community College weaves together interdisciplinary and general education outcomes at the program level. The general education outcomes statements reinforce the integration of learning outcomes across the curriculum. MCC is notably successful in reflecting its scholarly values and its commitment to develop attitudes and skills required for lifelong learning on a shrinking planet. A significant number of MCC graduates intend to and do successfully transfer to four-year colleges and universities. Research from the Office of Research and Planning and data from the State of Arizona for higher education confirm that students continue to transfer in large numbers and persist through graduation.

MCC's mission statement speaks to excellence in teaching and learning and the quality of life in the community it serves. The general education goals identify the knowledge and skills requisite to an associate degree graduate. The institution's processes for re-evaluating and refreshing the mission and outcomes are appropriate for a two-year institution which must remain responsive while keeping its focus on universal learning goals.

The Office of Planning and Research documents student performance by way of the instruments used annually to assess student performance in relation to the learning outcomes for general education. All of the documentation presented in the Self-Study Report and in data arrayed in the Resource Room indicate that students completing their programs perform at a significantly higher level than those students at the beginning of the same programs. The assessment strategies employed by Mesa Community College effectively document that student learning is occurring.

The academic departments conduct program reviews on a regular four-year schedule. The results of program review include a variety of demographic indicators, outcome measures particular to the program under review, and advice from external constituencies. The College provided examples of changes and enhancements made in programs as a result of the program review process which attends to the currency and relevancy of courses and programs.

Mesa Community College curricula include "awareness" courses that are identified as having components of globalism, diversity, and/or historical awareness. In addition, co-curricular activities allow students the opportunity to participate in activities that promote awareness of cultural diversity and engender a global perspective. There are multiple strategies and widespread support for activities that cultivate and develop a sense of social responsibility including the Center for Global Tolerance, the Model UN Program, and the Center for Public Policy. The concept of service learning is extraordinarily well-integrated into the life of the institution. Its leadership have faculty status, further reinforcing the importance placed on the role of service learning in the curriculum. There is documentation in the self-study materials on the numbers of students, faculty, and community organizations involved in and/or touched by Service Learning, Americorps, and other similar programs at MCC.

Academic programs and other program and service areas (such as the Business and Industry Institute) have advisory committees that provide insight into the current expectations for skills necessary for career preparation and competent performance in the rapidly changing workplace. Evidence was provided that indicates advisory committees are consulted regularly and provide appropriate advice that shapes and enhances programs. MCC uses its advisory committees to continuously improve and update its academic programs and other services.

Several Mesa Community College courses and programs provide opportunity for students to work side-by-side with faculty on research projects. These, together with such programs as Study Abroad and Model UN, enable students to interact with others and thus expand their understanding beyond what can be learned in a classroom setting. MCC provides a broad menu of opportunities for students to learn and practice skills of scholarship that will serve them well as they transfer to four-year colleges and universities. In addition, there are a number of portfolio and capstone projects that call for students to assemble work that represents their progress through a program. Proficiency in the use of computers and information literacy is expected and reinforced through assignments at the library and other computing resources located around the campus. The items selected for the workplace skills assessment demonstrate that skills outside of program-related technical competencies are developed throughout the curriculum.

2. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components needs organizational attention.
3. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components requires Commission follow-up.
4. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components is not met and requires Commission follow-up.

**Recommendation of the Team:** Criterion met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

## E. CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

**As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.**

### 1. Evidence that demonstrates core components are met:

Although the commitment to and support of teaching and the encouragement of lives of learning and scholarship for students, employees, and community make Mesa Community College distinctive, the College's engagement with and service to the community are its most remarkable attributes. Mesa Community college's relationship to the community it serves is a model for all institutions of higher learning.

As the College is connected and responsive to the community, so is the community connected and responsive to the College. Evidence of engagement and collaboration is everywhere apparent—in the persuasive presence and testimony of individuals of diverse backgrounds from all corners of a community that understands and values the College as a center and catalyst of cultural, social, intellectual, and economic growth.

The organization's commitments are shaped by its mission and its capacity to support the mission guided by its values. Planning for inevitable growth is both mission and values-directed and focuses on contributing to and enhancing the quality of life of the people in the community it serves. A notable example is the involvement of a desert preservation group that has been an integral part of ensuring that the Red Mountain Campus reflects and enhances its physical environment. The walking path with indigenous plants with information posted creates a curriculum of the environment through which students and community members can both learn and enjoy.

The College has formed successful partnerships with area high schools and has created seamless educational pathways that facilitate matriculation for students still enrolled in high school as well as high school graduates. The recruitment office sponsors regular activities to engage high school students with the college. Project REACH encourages college enrollment as early as sophomore year in high school. Partnerships like the East Valley Think Tank and the Tech Prep Consortium support the enhancement of learning opportunities for students in the College's service area. Such efforts have produced a steady growth of high school students from the 17 area high schools—over 3200 students in the 2003-04 school years.

MCC has entered into a unique partnership with Empire Southwest Caterpillar leading to an AAS degree. The cohort program meets on-site at Empire Southwest. Students receive wages, financial assistance and tools from Empire Southwest and have access to all the services offered to MCC students. At the end of the degree program, all students receive job offers. This program serves a four state area and other business and industries have expressed interest in this very successful model. The Caterpillar partnership together with other partnership and apprentice programs with trades, nursing and businesses are indicative that the College supports and is supported by the communities it serves.

Mesa Community College demonstrates attention to the diversity of constituencies it serves. For example, the welcoming office for Hispanic students was created in response to a compelling need. Although the College has long had a multicultural affairs office, there was not the readily available bilingual assistance, both in print and in person that now is present. Evidence presented through environmental scanning and conversations with community members and employees at both campuses indicates that the College consciously creates an environment designed to meet the needs of those it serves.

The College is responsive to the needs of the older and retired community members in its district through the community education programs for seniors and the New Frontiers for Learning and Retirement Program. These initiatives create and support educational, social, and volunteer opportunities for a growing and active population, enriching their lives and gaining community support for the College. Individual testimonials from community members during the accreditation visit indicated how much this population values the services of the College. The seniors were among the most ardent supporters of the recent referendum that resulted in nearly a billion dollars for capital improvement and expansion in the Maricopa Community College District. (The referendum passed by 76 % district wide, and more than 80% in the area served by MCC).

The College's transfer policies and practices clearly create an environment supportive of the mobility of the learners. Formal articulation agreements and/or partnerships exist between MCC and 30 colleges and universities, including Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, Northern Arizona University, Brigham Young University and others. The articulation partnerships ensure a barrier-free transfer process, enabling students to continue their education at the college or university of their choice.

The College values feedback from community members and actively seeks their input into the decision-making processes of the College. There is evidence both written and spoken that community leaders value the College's outreach and successful efforts to engage the community with the College and the College with the community. Such formal organizations as the Commission on Excellence in Education, the Center for Community Education, a variety of advisory councils, and the Changing Demographic Project are excellent examples of engagement.

Students at MCC have the opportunity to develop professional expertise by volunteerism in their Selected professions. For example, up to three credits can be earned in the Mortuary Science program's service learning course. Such credit classes under the umbrella of the comprehensive Service learning initiative at MCC allow students to reaffirm their future career path while engaging with and serving the community in their field of study.

2. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components needs organizational attention.
3. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components requires Commission follow-up.
4. Evidence that demonstrates one or more specified core components is not met and requires Commission follow-up.

**Recommendation of the Team:** Criterion met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

## V. AFFILIATION STATUS

### A. SUMMARY OF COMMISSION REVIEW

### B. NATURE OF ORGANIZATION

1. **Legal Status:** No Change
2. **Degrees Awarded:** No Change

### C. CONDITIONS OF AFFILIATION

3. **Stipulation on Affiliation Status:** No Change
4. **Approval of Degree Sites:** No Change
5. **Approval of Distance Education Degree:** No Change
6. **Reports Required:** None
7. **Other Visits Scheduled:** None

### D. SUMMARY OF COMMISSION REVIEW

Timing for next comprehensive visit: ( academic year – 2014-2015)

Rationale for recommendation:

Based on evidence presented to, discovered and confirmed during the on-site visit by the team members and documented by them in the statements in support of the College's fulfillment of the criteria and core components in the Assurance Section of this Report, the team members are unanimous in their endorsement recommending to the Higher Learning Commission that Mesa Community College be re-accredited with its current statement of affiliation status and with its next comprehensive visit scheduled to occur in 2014-2015.

Apart from seeking authorization to offer distance education or modifying the mission to include any baccalaureate level offerings, the team recommends no monitoring or progress reports or focused visits. The team has every confidence that Mesa Community College is positioned to carry on its mission into the future and serving its own declared “ultimate purpose . . . to improve the quality of life in the community we serve.”

## **VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR EXPLANATIONS**