

**Mesa Community College December 2004 Administrative Survey
Faculty Senate Summary Report
Spring 2005**

Introduction

The Mesa Community College (MCC) Faculty Senate is the official representative and voice of the residential faculty of the college. At an institution as large as MCC that has several campuses and sites, good communication and interaction are critical to the success of shared goals and governance between faculty and administration. In the spirit of our college's focus on learning, it is also imperative that the Faculty Senate in representing their constituencies gather information to improve and enhance their dialogue and decision making about issues related to governance through systematic means.

In December 2004, the MCC Faculty Senate distributed a survey to all MCC residential faculty that asked them to share their opinions and perception about Administration at MCC. The purpose of this survey was to determine the faculty's perspectives and attitudes related to their interactions and communication with the MCC administration. In addition, the Senate wanted their constituencies to identify areas of challenges and strengths in the relationship between the MCC faculty and administration. And, most importantly, the MCC Senate intended to collect data that can be used as baseline information for what will be an ongoing program to survey faculty at MCC concerning their perception about administration so that improved and enhanced communication and relations between the faculty and administration can be fostered. As such, the survey was to be used to collect data in order to assess the views of MCC faculty. This survey was not intended to be an evaluation of MCC administration or any individual administrator, rather its intent is as an instrument to collect data concerning faculty perceptions related to communication.

The survey consisted of three parts: a series of questions to be answered on a numerical scale, demographic information, and a section for comments by respondents. It was designed by faculty to measure faculty perceptions and, as the history section of this narrative indicates, is the culmination of a multi-year conversation by the residential faculty, their Senate representatives, and administration.

Clearly, MCC faculty care about the communication at MCC and view communication to be of utmost importance. The high response level (48%) to this survey indicates that faculty wish to better the communication between faculty and administration. Indeed, this is the main purpose of this survey. However, as the history section of this document indicates, there has been a misinterpretation of the nature and purpose of this survey. A close reading of this document should dispel this misconception.

In addition, it is important to remain cognizant of the meaning of “concern” as used in the survey document. This word should be defined as “care or considers to be of importance”; “concern” should not be interpreted negatively.

History of the Process

Since the founding of the college, residential faculty have been actively concerned about the success of the institution. As MCC has grown and evolved the faculty began to examine the entire process of communication within the college and between its members. Further, faculty began to question their role in the process, especially as they wish to share the responsibility of the college’s future success.

Beginning in early 1990 the faculty and the faculty Senate began discussions regarding the climate of communication at MCC, about the responsibility of faculty to maintain trustworthy, accurate, and clear communication, and about the perception that administration was not reciprocating in this concern. As part of this discussion, the role of administration in the communication process was explored, and, at that time, it was agreed that more data was necessary if an informed discussion was to continue. That is, after a long period of discussion, members of the faculty began to seek more concrete information or data to elevate the discussion.

From 1992 to 2002 the discussion continued within and outside the MCC Faculty Senate. In a Zone report on 22 October 1999, members of the Faculty Senate noted that they had recently been asked by a number of faculty to address the anonymous letters of complaint that had been circulating at MCC, within the Governing Board, and to the Chancellor since January 1999. A Senate Motion was made and approved on 28 October 1999 to address the climate that motivated the circulation of the anonymous letters. One of the specific recommendations made was to conduct an internal climate study during the Fall 1999 semester. The study should address the climate of the college as perceived by every employee at MCC. This was completed by an external expert in climate analysis.

On 4 May 2000, Senate sent a letter to Dr. Christiansen discussing his meeting with Senate on the previous day, 3 March 2000. The purpose of Dr. Christiansen’s visit was to discuss the results of the aforementioned climate study.

At that time the President encouraged the Faculty Senate to pursue the development of an evaluation mechanism for the administration.

Around the same time, Faculty Senate and the Department Chair Association had completed the development of a comprehensive evaluation instrument for department chairs; thus, the Faculty Senate made a recommendation to develop an evaluation in-

strument for administrative positions that was consistent with that effort. The recommendation included the following:

1. The Faculty Senate requests that a comprehensive evaluation of administrative leadership positions be developed and included in the college plan.
2. This evaluation should be piloted during the 2000-2001 academic year.
3. Similar to the development of the department chair evaluation, a representative group of MAT and upper-level administrative employees should be charged with the development of this evaluation.
4. The evaluation should include, at the very minimum, a campus-wide survey of all administrative leadership positions that consists of evaluation question developed by the representative MAT employee group identified above.
5. The campus-wide survey should also include evaluation questions developed by each of the employee groups – Residential Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, Professional Staff, Maintenance & Operations, College Safety, and Crafts. The number and format of these questions should be determined annually and appropriate changes made prior to the evaluation being conducted each academic year.

Attached were two examples of administrative evaluations at other MCCD Colleges—one currently in use and the other in development.

By mid 2002 the faculty Senate began to consider developing a survey instrument to measure faculty attitudes and views on communication with administration. The intent of this survey was to continue the spirit of “concern” that had marked faculty commitment to Mesa Community College since 1964. The above discussion has been conducted in a public and professional manner. The Senate discussions, particularly those that developed in 2002, are reflected in the Senate minutes, published on the MCC Faculty Senate web site. These minutes are public record and are available to anyone who wishes to access them.

Description of the Process

As indicated in the Senate minutes from the first meeting in December 2002, a motion was presented and passed to develop an instrument to collect data from faculty dealing with the issue of communication on campus with the administration.

A Senate subcommittee was formed, and the members of the subcommittee began work to develop this questionnaire. Again, the intent was to collect information for an ongoing process, and the questionnaire was not intended as a formal academic study; rather, it was a first effort to gather preliminary data to compare to the often anecdotal evi-

dence used by individual members of the academic community to portray communication between participants within our college.

Extensive research was conducted on similar institutions who conducted similar surveys. These examples were gathered and analyzed as to their usefulness and appropriateness as models for an MCC survey.

Work on the survey, which is documented in the Senate minutes, continued through 2003, and by the beginning of the 2004-2005 academic year, an instrument was prepared. This instrument consisted of a series of questions addressing communication with administration, a demographic section, and an area for comments.

Discussion then centered on which administrators to include – the president only, the president and the three deans, or all administration. After a rather lengthy debate it was decided by the Senate to include all administration in the survey.

The survey was administered in December 2004, results were compiled in January 2005, and this narrative prepared between January 2005 and April 2005 for presentation to the Senate for comment. The narrative was completed by the end of April 2005.

This is an ongoing process. The 2004-2005 Faculty Senate has established this initial survey that will be continued in the future on a regular basis.

Description of the survey¹

As indicated, the survey consists of three parts.

Part 1

A series of 28 questions to be rated on a 1 – 5 scale with

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

8 = I am not familiar enough with this administrator or his or her duties to assign a score.

9 = I do not understand what the question is asking.

Part 2

A series of demographic questions

¹ A copy of the survey will be provided upon request.

Part 3

An area for comment and elaboration.

Methodology

The history behind the development of an administration / college climate survey is detailed in the introduction portion of this summary. The development of an instrument to obtain data concerning the perceived climate at MCC has been discussed for some time. The MCC Faculty Senate voted to take on the task of developing an instrument early in the Fall 2004 semester. This section of the summary will describe the timeline, as well as the development and implementation processes and procedures.

Timeline

The Senate decided that an instrument would be readied for distribution by the end of the Fall 2004 semester. Faculty would then complete the survey and return it by the end of the Fall 2004 semester. The timing of both the distribution and return of the survey was necessary to ensure that the Faculty Senate had sufficient time to process the data and to complete a narrative summary by the end of the Spring 2005 semester.

Development: Process and Procedure Summary

Development of this survey was a multi-phased process and involved three subcommittees of the Faculty Senate: The Development Subcommittee, The Data Compilation and Analysis Subcommittee, and The Narrative Summary Subcommittee.

First: A general discussion was conducted within the Senate to decide on some general processes and procedures for creating, conducting, and processing the results of the survey. A basic timeline was agreed upon. It was also determined that the instrument would contain all administrators from the Senior Associate Deans to the President of the college as defined on the Administration's Organizational Charts (available on the administration's website).

Second: Research was done to investigate how similar instruments are used at other colleges and how those instruments were constructed. The Development Subcommittee commenced research by utilizing information concerning similar surveys at other colleges. A few of these college sites are listed in Appendix A of this summary. Many instruments were identified by the Development Subcommittee, and a pool of possible questions was created based on these instruments along with questions suggested by Faculty Senate members. The questions related to the following general areas: Treatment of Others, Vision, Planning and Action, Policies and Procedures, Inclusiveness, Support of Teaching and Scholarship, Communication, and Demographics.

Third: The pool of questions was reviewed by the Faculty Senate members, and the question pool was refined based on input from all Senators. This process continued

over several Senate meetings until a reasonable number of questions was agreed upon by the entire Senate. The thirty-five questions and the general comment question formed the body of the instrument.

Fourth: A grid containing the thirty-five questions, the general comment question, and the administrator's names was developed, was approved by the Senate, and was distributed to the faculty for completion by the end of the Fall 2004 term. The final instrument is contained in Appendix B of this summary.

Fifth: After the completed surveys were returned, a Data Compilation and Analysis Subcommittee of the Senate compiled the data into a spreadsheet for analysis. The compiled data, as well as requested statistical analyses, was then turned over to a Narrative Subcommittee for interpretation.

Sixth: The last stage in completing this project consisted of drafting this narrative that details the history, methodology, results, and future directions of this survey. The narrative summary was then approved by the Senate, accepted by the Senate President as a guide for future endeavours, and disseminated to the faculty.

Data Analysis

Of the 280 surveys distributed by the Senate, 135 were completed and returned (a return rate of 48%). Numbers on the rating scale were compiled in an Excel spreadsheet and comments were listed separately for each administrator. Aggregate data for all numeric responses were tallied and summarized for the administration both as a whole and as group sets. Analyses were based on the percentage of faculty responses on each item. In addition, responses 8 and 9, which indicated respectively faculty members' unfamiliarity of the administrators and their duties and lack of understanding of the question asked, were eliminated as they do not provide, percentage-wise, positive or negative data. Therefore, the differences between those choices indicating a positive perception (5 and 4) and those choices indicating a negative perception (2 and 1) were used to indicate the dominant perceptions among faculty who could provide an informed response to each item.

Note: when the survey was distributed, completed, and compiled, new titles based on the recent MAT Reclassification had not been approved and adopted. Thus, the analysis includes former titles.

Rather than analyzing individual administrators, data were arranged and examined using various group configurations of administrators. In other words, groups arranged by similar or like administrative roles and responsibilities, were formed and used to identify patterns as determined by the survey responses. The area of Administrative Services is not included in this analysis. In analyzing the data for this survey, it was

clear that many respondents were not familiar with the duties of this area to respond positively or negatively; those who did respond perceived the one administrator positively. In addition, the survey did not include managers or directors at the same level as associate deans.

These groups are labeled and defined as:

Group A: Senior executives: President and three full deans

Group B: Instructional Senior Associate Deans: Senior Associate Deans who were directly responsible for specific instructional disciplines departments

Group C: Academic Support Senior Associate Deans: Senior Associate Deans who administered and supported academic areas

Group D: Student Services Administration: Acting Dean of Students and three senior Associate deans of student services

Group E: Student Services Senior Associate Deans: Three senior associate deans in Student services

In addition, other groups based on like or similar functions or relationships with faculty were examined:

Group F: Perceived college leadership: President and Dean of Instruction

Group G: Instructional administrators: Dean of Instruction and three instructional senior associate deans

Group H: Academic support administrators: Dean of Instruction and three academic support senior associate deans

Finally, questions with similar subject or purpose were grouped together, and the comments made by survey respondents were used to further clarify the findings of this analysis. This document presents a representative number of comments. Many respondents made similar comments, and in some cases, comments were not used if the language was inflammatory.

Findings

When administration as a whole aggregate body was examined, as expected, the data showed two basic patterns:

The survey responses seem to indicate that, in general, faculty do not know enough about administration and their duties. 42%-60% of the total 135 respondents indicated that they were not familiar enough with administration or their duties to assign a score. As evidenced by several comments, many faculty feel that they do not interact with administration or understand their duties adequately in order to provide an informed response to the survey questions. In fact, some faculty were unfamiliar both with the duties of some administrators and with the administrators themselves. Comments by survey respondents include, "I very rarely interact with the Administration," "The fact that I have so many scores of 8 indicates that faculty and administration are not in enough contact," and "I am wondering why I don't know all those administrators."

However, of those who did indicate possessing enough familiarity with administration, most viewed the group and their performances positively with the exception of their performance in reference to item 15 of the survey. Item 15, "Adequately disciplines employees who are not fulfilling their responsibilities," had a higher percentage of negative or unfavorable responses; performance in terms of item 15 was also negatively perceived among several group sets (A, F, G and H). Comments made concerning this item include, "Administration does very little to support faculty. Little can be done about poor instruction or just bad teachers."

Responses also indicated several areas of improvement: these include improvement or enhancement of communication between faculty and administration, relations, or familiarity of administration and faculty with each other. The notion of disciplining incompetent or non-performing employees suggests there is a need for improvement of management or supervisory efforts among administrators, particularly those in groups A, F, G, and H.

When examining particular group sets, most faculty were unfamiliar with administrators or their duties to assign a rating in student services (D and E) and Group H, Academic Support administration. However, those administrators in the groups D, E, and H were rated with positive numbers among faculty members who knew them and their duties. Administrators in Group G were also rated with positive numbers, and most faculties were familiar with them and their duties. However, because individuals varied in rating in Group G, the difference between positive and negative perceptions was lower overall in Group G than in D, E, and H. Essentially, the positive percentage was lower than the other groups.

Findings suggest that faculty feel the administration in student services and senior associate deans in academic support group, although perceived fairly positively, could establish better relations or communicate more with faculty, especially about their duties. Survey responses suggest that instructional senior associate deans appear to communicate well with faculty and are perceived fairly positively overall. However, par-

particular instructional senior associate deans could improve faculty interactions and familiarity.

Upon closer examination, when faculty were familiar with the administrators and their duties to respond, management of employees (item 15) and openness and honesty concerning mistakes (Item 26) appear to be rated more negatively. These two items were consistent in Groups A, F, G, and H. Although negative responses were not significantly plentiful (-1.2%) in Group H, several faculty indicated more negative responses for Item 19 (Responds to the recommendations put forward by employee committees).

In Groups A (6 items) and F (17 items) had more items that were perceived negatively than any other groups, In addition, most faculty were familiar with the administrators and their duties to assign rating in A and F.

In addition to the aforementioned Items 15, 19, and 16 in Groups G and H, faculty rated more negatively than positively on Items 16, 17, and 18 for the senior executive group. These items relate the employing hiring practices and procedures that strengthen the college, collaboration with employees on important decisions, and valuing recommendations put forward by employee committees, respectively. These suggest the faculty lack confidence and trust in the administration when it comes to hiring and collaborative decision-making. Faculty appear to feel that employee recommendations are not valued. Indeed, the hiring process was the focus for many respondents' comments: "We do need to hire more effectively to improve the quality of our pools. We desperately need more residential faculty. We should improve the conditions of the adjunct faculty," "The hiring process does not work. Good candidates are lost due to the process," and "The hiring process is completely out of control. The lack of adherence to timelines, recommendations from staffing committee and the following of process is of great concern." All of these responses received for these items may suggest several aspects of management and leadership among senior administrators in general and individually: better two-way communication, mutual respect and trust building, and true collaboration.

Group F, President and Dean of Instruction set, includes more items (17 out of 28) that were negatively rated than positively. In addition to ones already mentioned, these responses suggest areas of improvement in

- *fostering a positive and open college climate* (Items 1 [atmosphere of trust], 3 [tolerance of diverse/differing ideas and opinions], and 4 [open environment free of retaliation and fear]). Selected comments for this group include: "I truly believe MCC has the potential to be/maintain its position as a cutting-edge leader in higher education. The hierarchical and oppressive atmosphere fostered by some of the current administration jeopardizes our potential, however. Faculty and staff should be encouraged to do

their best work, and they should not feel they need to ‘fly under the radar’ for fear of retribution if administration disagrees with them. I am actually afraid to send this in the mail, and that is ridiculous,” “There is a serious culture of fear of administration. This should not be the case,” “Administrators’ use intimidation and power to control behaviors—creating a negative and non-trusting work environment,” and “Fear of retaliation is rampant at the college.”

- *professional respect* (Items 5 [treating each employee with equity and fairness] and 7[maintains confidentiality and professionalism when dealing with personal and/or professional disagreements])
- *decision making* (Items 6 [demonstrates objectivity in decision making], 24 [effectively communicates with employees on important decisions], and 25 [demonstrates openness and honesty concerning decisions he/she makes]). Comments for these items include: “[A senior administrator] does not value a “shared governance” approach to managing our college. [This individual] is willing to accept recommendations from faculty; however, [this individual] does not close the communications loop by communicating back to faculty [the] logic or reasoning for [this administrator’s] exceptions to faculty recommendations.”
- *support of existing programs/services* (Item 11 [adequately supports existing programs and services]). Comments include: “Planning for innovative programs is given lip service but not supported with substance. One need only look at the assessment center on campus which has remained in its present space and staff allocation for over 15 years while the college enrollment has grown dramatically.” However, some respondents noted a positive perception concerning this item: “MCC administrators generally support innovative instruction.”
- *meeting faculty and staff* (Item 14 [strives to meet the needs of faculty and staff]). Several respondents expressed concern about the ability to gain access to administrators; their comments include: “Difficult to gain access to some Senior Administration. This creates a great deal of frustration and problems. Associate Deans are given responsibility but little or no authority,” and “It is difficult to schedule appointments with some senior administrators.”
- *visibility and access in the workplace* (item 27 [is visible and accessible in the workplace]). Comments include: “Primary issues regarding [this group] [is its] communication style and lack of access/presence among faculty and staff, as well as [its] inability or unwillingness to make decisions—or clearly articulate rationale for decisions.

Positive comments for this group were also received and should be noted; these comments include: “I am proud of the administration of MCC. We have an extremely strong management team,” “[A senior administrator] has brought the strategic planning

and student assessment process at MCC to an entirely new level of sophistication,” and “[A senior administrator] is a visionary. [This individual] is willing to work with faculty as long as faculty initiate and are responsible for maintaining the dialogue.”

The range of perception ranged from -.9% for Item 11 on adequately supports existing programs and services to a high negative rating of -62.4% for Item 15 on adequately disciplines employees who are not fulfilling their responsibilities. The range also suggests dissatisfaction of faculty in areas of management, interpersonal relations and mutual respect, communication, particularly of decisions, responsiveness and access.

Because of the manner in which the roles and demands of this particular group were perceived and deemed by the faculty, it is clear that work must be done within this leadership group. Data indicate that most faculty who responded were not familiar with several administrators and their duties, especially those listed under academic support and student services areas. This suggests that communication and interactions need to occur or to be fostered between faculty and administrators in these areas. Faculty may not be aware of what exactly these administrators do. Interestingly, faculty even on Senate did not know that two members under the administrative services dean were at the senior associate dean level. This is most compelling because one of the major topics discussed consistently has centered on faculty and information technology issues.

It is surprising that faculty who responded view disciplinary actions on those who are not fulfilling their responsibilities as a major issue. This could possibly suggest that faculty want administrators to take action on non-performers. However, if one looks further they also expect administration to be fair and treat employees with equity and respect—basic professional behaviors. Communication appears to be an issue still. Faculty who responded defined the need for communication to be conducted more deeply and meaningfully than possible through emails or notices alone. They appear to expect true open and honest dialogue as well as objectivity in decision-making.

Concluding Remarks and Suggestions

The MCC Faculty Senate is proud of this survey and its results after years of discussion and approximately two years of development. Through the process and instrument, those analyzing the data culled invaluable information that will assist the Faculty Senate in determining future directions for itself and for future discussions with both faculty and administration.

The reaction to the survey by the faculty and administration yielded significant information to help the Senate in future endeavors. As a result of the input of faculty members, the Senate has a better understanding of survey question design and implementation. In addition, it is clear that this survey process and instrument need to be im-

proved. However, it provided the Senate with basic baseline information to enhance and to improve their interactions with administration.

Surely administration will accept and view this process as a means to learn more about and to improve the perceptions of their behavior and actions. The survey results require the administration to think critically and honestly about these perceptions and look to change for the better of the college, its culture, and its future. Perhaps reflective and honest questions that foster such critical thinking could include:

- How can communication processes or access be more meaningful and timely?
- How can access to and communication with administration be improved?
- How can administration and faculty work more closely together on common concerns, such as improving the college climate or dealing with ineffective or ineffectual employees?
- Why are trust, openness, and honesty between administration and faculty not felt or perceived?

This is the first time that MCC faculty have been given an opportunity to express themselves in such a survey; for this, many faculty appreciate the opportunity to reflect on administrations. Respondents recognized the efforts of the MCC Faculty Senate in their remarks: "This survey is very timely and constructive," "I truly hope that this evaluative tool will be used to make some major changes on our campus," and "Thank you for this opportunity."

However, as this was the first time for such a survey, there were several unforeseen issues and challenges that arose during the survey dissemination. Reactions included that the survey was an evaluation research design or a performance evaluation. Not everyone on the senior associate dean level was included on the college organizational chart, such as those under the Office of Administrative Services. Also, assumptions were made that the survey was intended to attack individual administrators or to negatively impact the NCA Self Study process. However, such misinterpretation or misperception suggests several next steps:

- Faculty Senate needs to continue to review and refine the instrument and the processes used, including timely and clear communication.
- Information on the college organizational chart is misleading or incomplete so it should be explained or modified
- Communication processes between administration and Faculty Senate, Faculty Senate and faculty members, and individual Faculty and Faculty at-large can be improved

The Faculty Senate plans to continue this data collection process on a regular basis. This process is essential to an open and evolving college that focuses on learning, as MCC

defines itself in its strategic plan. The current instrument will be reviewed and revised based on the feedback provided by faculty and the needs of future Senates. A more automated process will also be utilized. It is likely that future surveys will include more topics, such as technology utilization at MCC and directions for its future. The Faculty Senate is always open to input surrounding this matter.

The MCC Faculty Senate would like to express its deepest thanks to the faculty who took the time to participate in this survey. It is our strongest desire that all residential faculty participate in future surveys. Input and insights are vital to the continued success of the MCC Faculty Senate's representation of its faculty. In addition, continued support and feedback will assist in instilling and in perpetuating the true spirit of shared governance and active participation in the college's success and future.

Appendix

AAUP—Philosophical Guidelines

http://web.utk.edu/~glenn/UTK_AAUP_Fac_Eval_Adms.html

Bridgewater State College—Instrument

http://www.bridgew.edu/HR/Forms/APA_Admin_Eval.pdf

Emporia State University—Instrument

<http://www.emporia.edu/facsen/1998-99/fsb98018.htm>

Tennessee Technological University—Philosophical and Process Guidelines

<http://www.tntech.edu/facultyhandbook/ii-42.htm>

University of Arkansas—Instrument

<http://www.uark.edu/depts/dbcafls/admin-evaluate.doc>