



**SOUTH MOUNTAIN
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**



*Charting Futures,
Connecting Worlds*

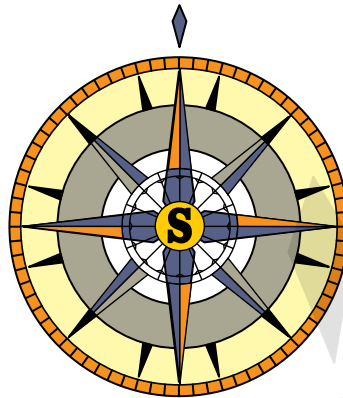
2009 SELF-STUDY REPORT



SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Self-Study Report 2009

Published February 2009



Charting Futures, Connecting Worlds

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Acknowledgements

The two-year long self-study project was the epitome of collaborative effort. The combined efforts of professional staff, managers, and faculty resulted in not only completing a lengthy self-study, but also accomplished the goal of building and strengthening bridges across employee groups. Regular faculty and staff events, convocation presentations, and frequent newsletters and e-mail updates served to unite the college community around the reaccreditation process.

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First, we extend thanks to our Project Writer, Ms. Sara Kinsey, who was completely dedicated to the self-study process, working countless nights and weekends for many months to ensure the successful completion of this report--all while remaining dedicated to the students in her English classes.

The members of the five criteria committees gave freely of their time to meet with their teams and search for examples of evidence. Project Managers assigned to each criterion attended monthly meetings with the Steering Committee and led their own committee meetings in search of examples of evidence for their criteria, and exhibited true professionalism.

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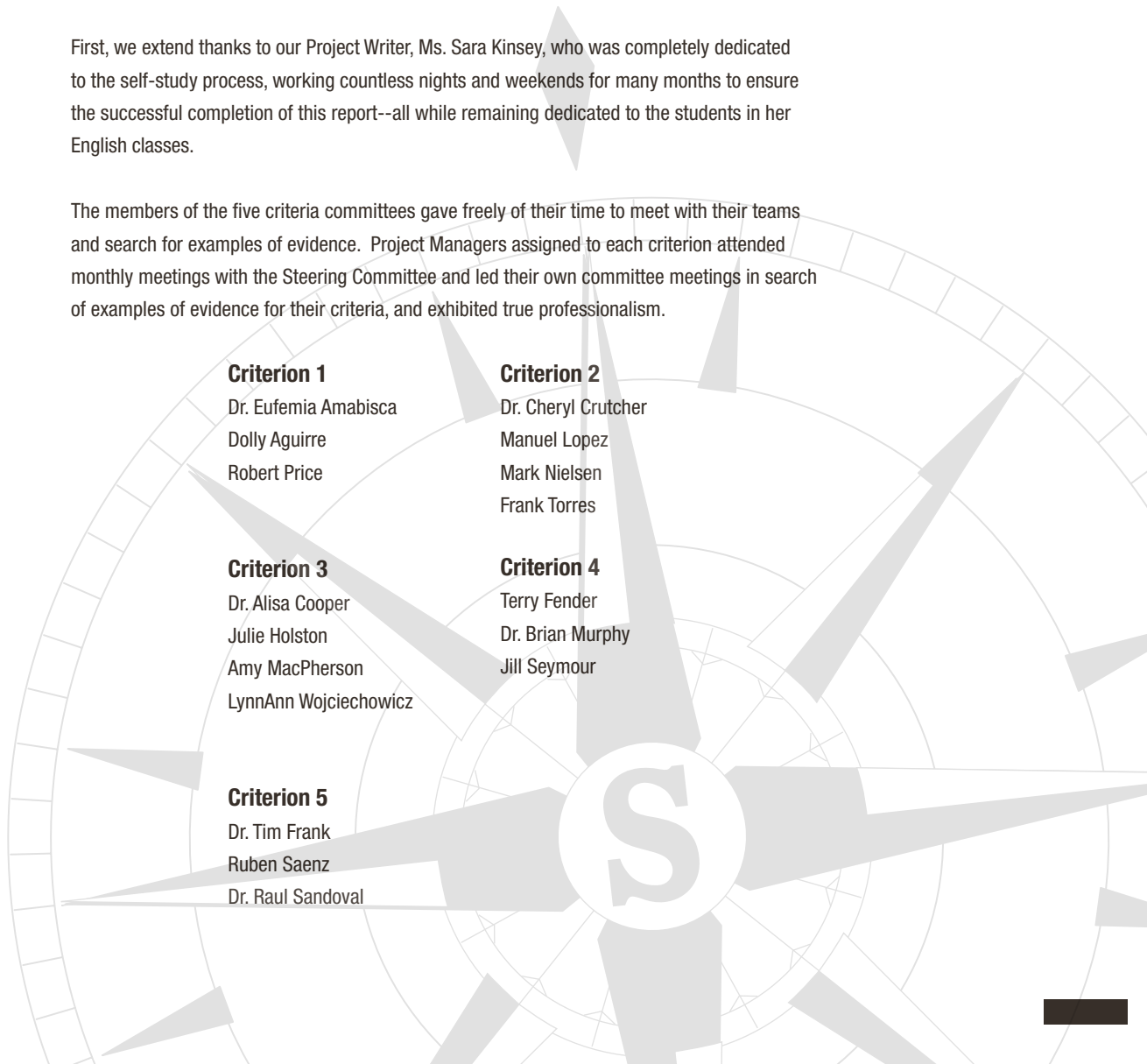
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HLC Accreditation Steering Committee

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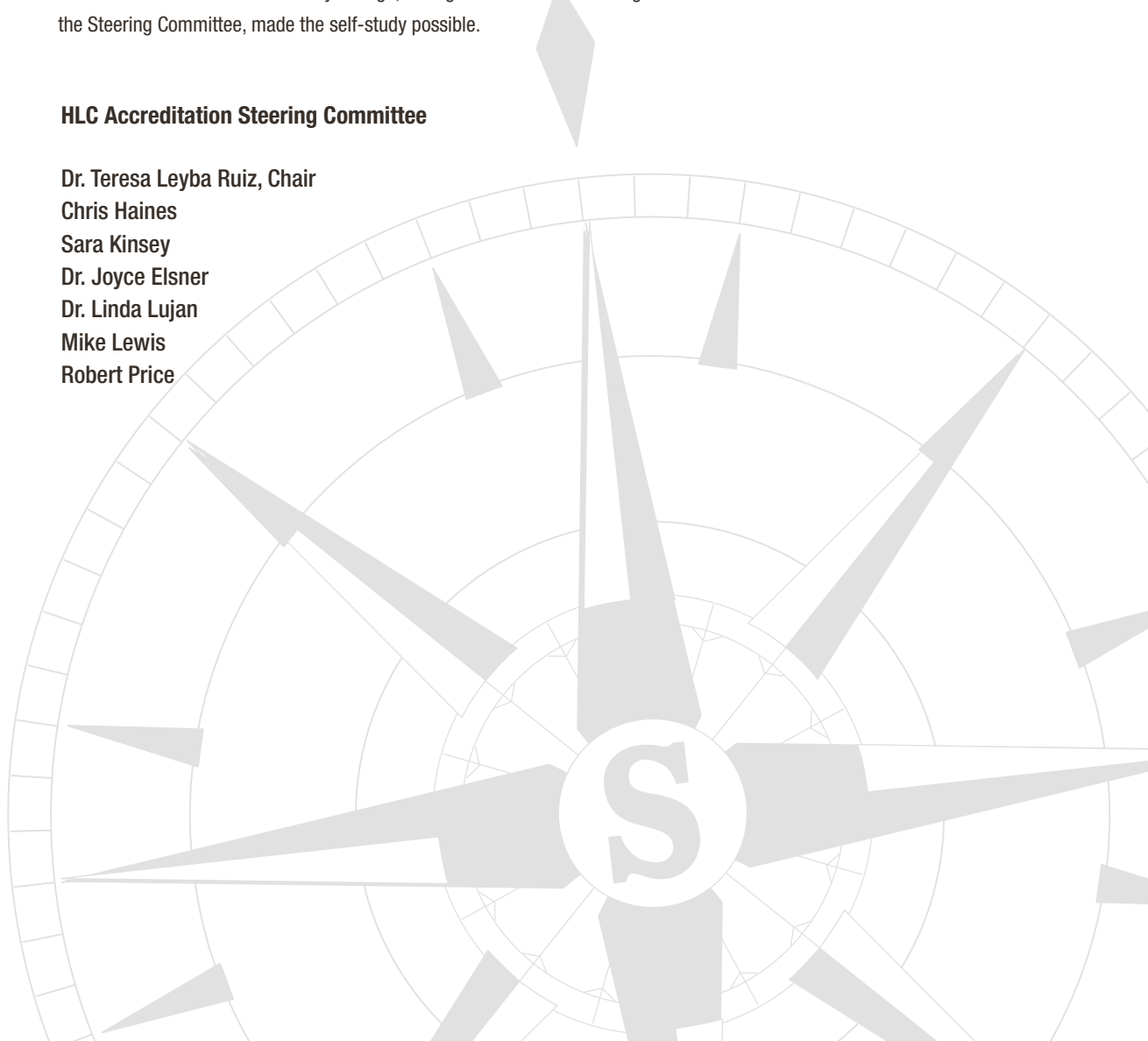
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South Mountain Community College's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Chapter 5: *Criterion Three*

South Mountain Community College provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Chapter 6: *Criterion Four*

South Mountain 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.

Chapter 7: *Criterion Five*

As called for by its mission, South Mountain Community College identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

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South Mountain Community College follows all federal and state legal and financial requirements and has completed all components of a self-study to maintain accreditation status with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association.

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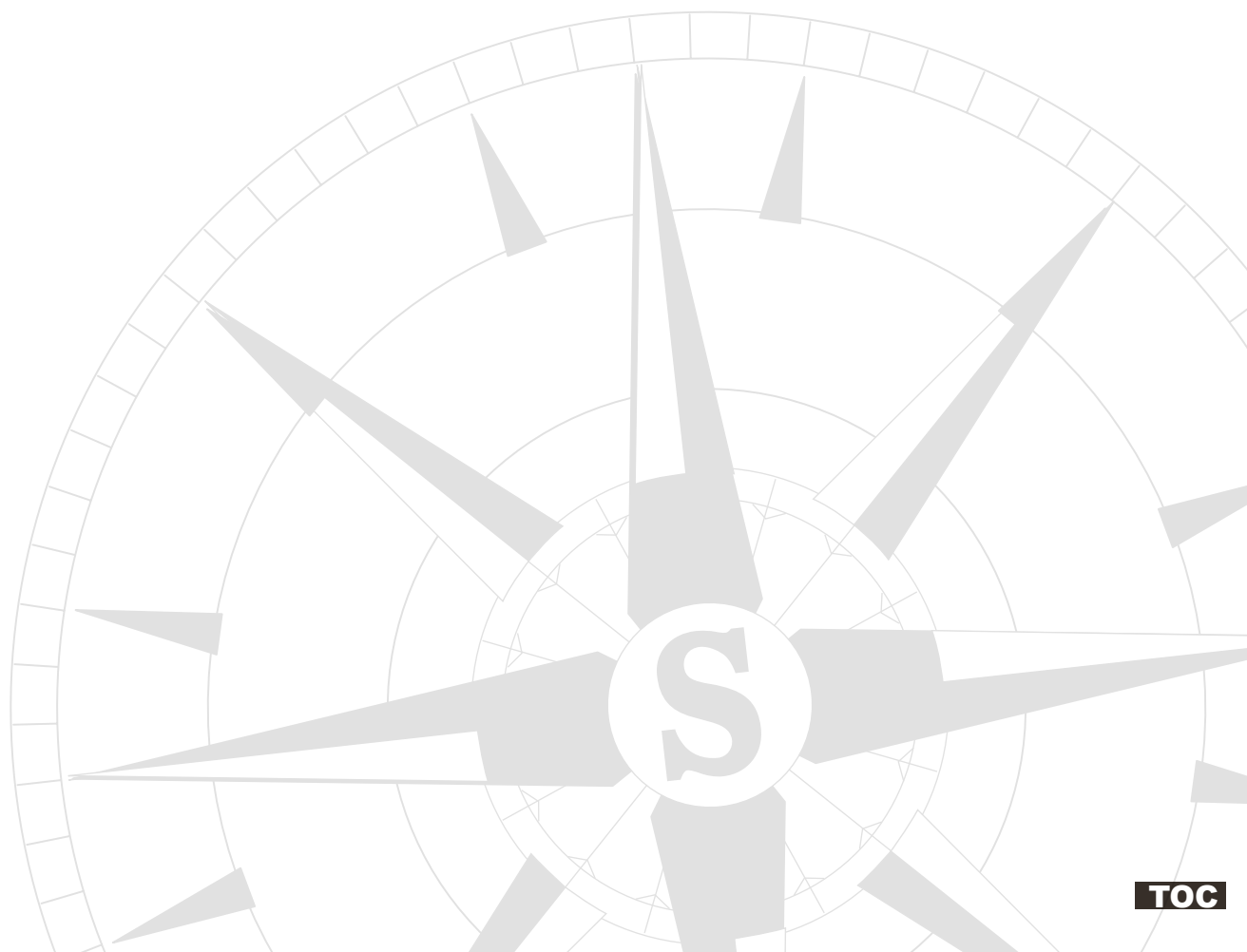
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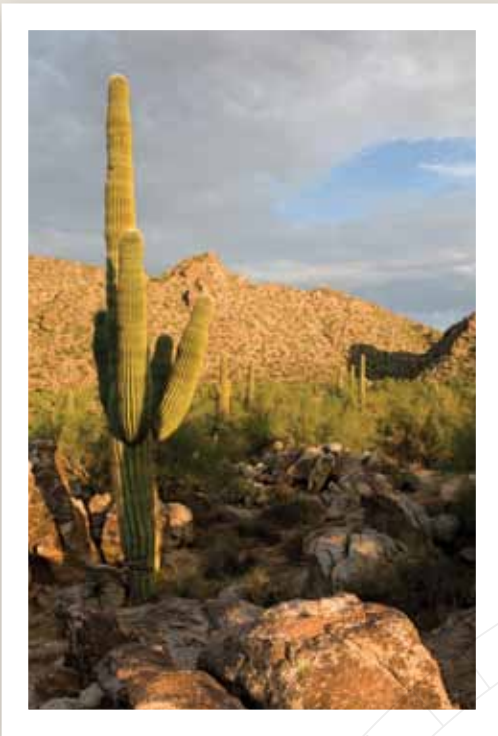
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Chapter 1 -College Profile



Introduction

This self-study report is submitted by South Mountain Community College to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association as part of the formal application process for continued accreditation. The primary purpose of the report is to document the findings of the comprehensive two-year self-study conducted by the college from January 2007-December 2008, and to provide members of the HLC visiting team with information necessary to effectively evaluate the college during their April 6-8, 2009 visit.

This report is also designed to be a public document, one which provides a thorough overview of the college for both its internal and external constituents. The college hopes the report provides effective insight into the college's strengths and challenges, and that current and prospective students, faculty members, staff, administrators, community members, district leadership, and governing board members will find it a document that confirms the many merits of South Mountain Community College.

The Higher Learning Commission uses five criteria upon which to base its evaluation of an institution:

1. Mission and Integrity
2. Preparing for the Future
3. Student Learning and Effective Teaching
4. Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge
5. Engagement and Service

South Mountain Community College's self-study report is organized around these five criteria, and also includes chapters that address the college's profile, the college's accreditation history and self-study process, federal compliance information, and a summarization of the report findings.

An organizational summary of the report is given below.

Chapter 1- College Profile

This chapter provides an overview of South Mountain Community College, its constituents, and its operations. The chapter also describes the significant changes since its last HLC evaluation in 1999.

Chapter 2- Accreditation History and Self-Study Process

This chapter presents the college accreditation history timeline, describes the college's response to the four concerns raised in the 1999 self-study, and delineates how the college organized and conducted the current self-study process. It also traces the self-study report writing process.

Chapters 3 through 7- The Criterion Chapters

Each chapter addresses a separate criterion and includes information and examples of evidence supporting South Mountain Community College's claim that it meets the criterion. Each chapter ends with a summary of findings and a brief listing of successes and challenges.

Chapter 8- Federal Compliance

This chapter presents the institution's compliance with federal regulations including those connected to credits, program length, tuition, financial aid, and campus crime reporting. The chapter contains necessary elements of state level compliance such as veteran services and information provided for the Arizona State Auditor General. Professional accreditation compliance is also addressed.

Chapter 9- Summary and Request for Continued Accreditation

Throughout the report, reliable, valid, and objective evidence is presented to support the assertion that South Mountain Community College does in fact meet the Higher Learning Commission criteria for continued accreditation, and that it also aligns with the defined "cross-cutting themes" identified by the Commission.

Maricopa County Community College District

www.maricopa.edu/about

Because South Mountain Community College is an individually accredited college operating within a much larger county-wide college district, the governing structure and scope of that district will be addressed first.

Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD), one of the largest community colleges systems in the nation, connects ten separately accredited colleges along with two skill centers, and represents forty-five years of excellence in higher education. A district map is included in the Appendix. The district is governed by a five-member, locally elected governing board that oversees and directs policies including terms of employment, salary and benefits, curriculum development, college governance, articulation agreements, curriculum, and federal, state, and county government interactions. The Chancellor and staff create administrative regulations in response to established Governing Board policies. The district unifies all of the colleges and centers with shared vision, mission, and value statements. *(These are included in the Appendix.)* All ten colleges are represented in the District policy and decision making process.

The District serves the 9226 square mile area of Maricopa County, its 3.9 million residents, and, per the MCCCD website (June 2008), “more than 250,000 students” each year with credit and non-credit courses. District-wide enrollment in spring 2008 totaled 112,250 students. The following student profile specifics were also true of that enrollment group:

- 39.7% are non-Anglo
- 56% of students are female
- 76.9% attend part-time
- 24.3% attend in the evening, and
- 43.8% are age 25 or older.
- 20-30% of MCCCD students attend more than one of the District colleges each semester.

The District employs nearly 4500 full-time faculty, staff, and administrators, and more than 9000 part-time faculty and staff. According to the MCCCD Human Resources website, employees district-wide are mostly Anglo (70%) and more than 58% female.

MCCCD's 2008-09 Fiscal Year budget is \$1,427,710,351. Primary revenue for the District is derived from Maricopa County property taxes, tuition and fees, and federal and state aid. Since 1999, tuition has nearly doubled from \$38.00 per credit hour to \$71.00 per credit hour for the 2008-09 Academic Year. However, this current cost continues to remain 13% below the national average for public two-year institutions, and 14% below the tuition rate average of western state schools stated by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE).

In addition, District bond monies are used to fund large technology, capital improvement, and construction projects throughout the district. There is a strong history of voter support for district-wide bond initiatives. The November 2004 \$951,359,000 bond referendum was approved by 76% of Maricopa County voters. More about the current District budget and process can be found at www.maricopa.edu/business/budget/.

SMCC's share of the 2004 Bond monies is \$59,000,000 and has been allocated for new construction, renovation of current classroom spaces, facilities, roadways, improved technology support, telecommunications, and data networks.

Maricopa County Community College District provides many benefits to its colleges. The District offers financial stability, easy college-to-college transferability for students, and extensive support for professional growth and training opportunities for all of its employees.

College Overview

Named for the beautiful South Mountain Park/Preserve bordering the southern edge of the Phoenix, Arizona metropolitan area, South Mountain Community College (SMCC) is a comprehensive two-year college that serves the rapidly growing and extremely diverse communities of South Phoenix, Ahwatukee, Tempe, Guadalupe, and Laveen.

In 1979, in response to the demand from a citizens group of South Phoenix, South Mountain Community College began offering classes at a variety of community sites. By the fall of 1981, the thirteen-building, 104 acre site at the 24th Street and Baseline Road main campus had been opened. Since that time, SMCC has grown with and for its surrounding communities, adding two more buildings to its main campus; establishing the Guadalupe Center in the town of Guadalupe at the eastern service area border in 1989; offering both credit and non-credit courses at the Ahwatukee Foothills Center at the southern area border beginning in 1999; and, most recently, offering courses at multiple sites in Laveen, a community west of the main campus.

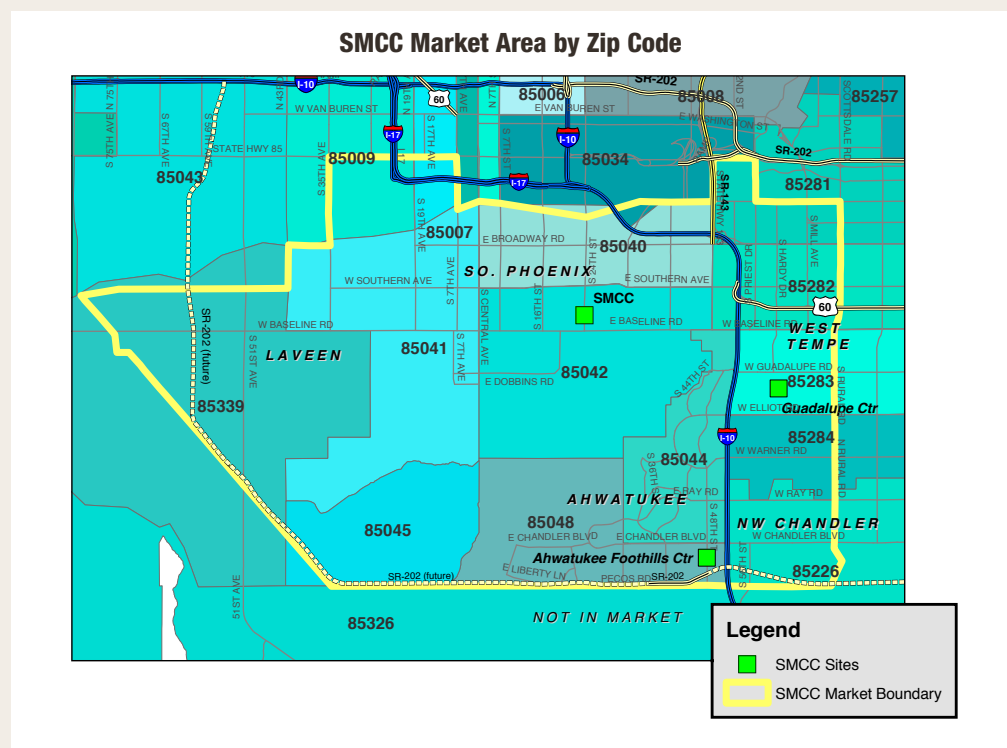
During the 2007-2008 academic year, South Mountain Community College served a total of 8,298 students with 74% of those students enrolled in credit courses. The college currently offers 29 associate and transfer degrees as well as 24 certificates of completion. More details about the degree and certificate programs offered can be found in the [South Mountain Community College catalog](#).

SMCC is a federally designated Minority Serving Institution (MSI), with nearly 60% of its students representing ethnic minority groups, and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), with nearly 40% of its students of Hispanic heritage. The college supports the Maricopa Community College District's mission and is a true reflection of the community it serves. Equally as important, the college continues to

serve its many diverse constituents by striving to provide excellence in university transfer, career, and personal enrichment opportunities.

College Service Area

South Mountain Community College's service area, containing over 300,000 people in 2008, can claim to contain the most diverse populations of any of the Maricopa County Community College District colleges. Mostly urban-suburban, and divided north/south by South Mountain itself, the main service area covers a six-mile radius from the main campus in South Phoenix as well as an extended service area boundary that extends west to 83rd Avenue, east to Rural Road (Tempe), north to University Road, and south to Pecos Road (south of the mountain). In addition to including significant Hispanic, African-American, and Anglo populations, this service area also includes populations from the Gila River Indian reservation and the Pascua Yaqui Indian tribe.



Even though South Mountain Community College is the smallest of the ten District colleges in enrollment size, the recent six year growth in the college's surrounding areas is important to note. Since 2003 the area surrounding South Mountain's main campus has continued to expand exponentially, with more than \$300,000,000 in subdivisions and infrastructures being added to the area in the last five years. In January 2001, there were only eleven subdivisions in this area. In 2007, there were 82 new home communities planned, built, or being built both in the immediate area of the college's main campus (24th St. and Baseline) and along the Baseline corridor (Bob Yarrow, Ultimate Information Systems). Many of these subdivisions are being planned/built as upscale, master-planned housing

communities in areas previously zoned and used as agricultural properties. In April 2005, Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon dubbed the area “Opportunity Corridor,” calling it “one of the hottest areas for job growth and quality-of-life growth.”

The service area population growth is up 18% from 2002 (more than double the 7.5% increase reported in the 1999 report) with 10-year projections (2008-2017) to be an increase of an additional 24%. Significant is the 28.2% growth in the Asian population in the service area in the last six years, but more significant is that nearly 40% of the service area population is currently age 0-24 with a projected 20% increase in that population over the next ten years. In addition, the age 50-69 group’s population will increase 34% in that same time frame (*EMSI Complete Employment, September 2007*).

This extensive population growth and the addition of more upscale housing developments in SMCC’s service area, both on the north and the south sides of South Mountain, have created sharp contrast to previously existing ethnic and economic environments. Prior to the college service area’s “boom” in 2003, the college student body population was localized in the neighborhoods surrounding the Base-line campus, and was significantly Hispanic (51.2%) and African-American (16.1%) in ethnicity. But as the college has expanded its service area, its ethnic “melting pot” has become increasingly diverse.

Table 1.1

2000 Census ethnic diversity percentages listed by college service area.

	Black	Hispanic	White	Asian	American Indian
South Phoenix	18.5	60.6	17.9	0.9	2.1
Ahwatukee	3.0	7.6	84.1	4.0	< 1.0
West Tempe	4.5	17.2	67.9	4.7	2.1
Guadalupe	1.1	72.3	1.5	< 1.0	44.2
Laveen	2.4	38.6	56.6	< 1.0	2.3

Note: The figures for Guadalupe exceed 100% because the 2000 Census survey allows for claiming more than one race. Many citizens in Guadalupe can claim both Pascua Yaqui and Hispanic heritages.

In addition to the increase in ethnic diversity, the economic development of the area has changed its socioeconomic face as well. In 2000, 22.5% of South Phoenix area families (near the main campus) lived below the poverty line. Now, median incomes per household in various regions of SMCC’s service area range from \$33,638 to \$110,165 per year. The college draws the majority of its enrollment from two nearby high school districts: Tempe Union High School District and Phoenix Union High School District. Major industry concentrations in the SMCC service area include (in a higher than average concentration than the rest of Maricopa County): Aerospace and Aviation, Agriculture and Food Processing, Bio-industry, High Tech (105 firms), Mining and Primary Metals, Plastics and Advanced Composites, Software, and Transportation and Distribution (527 firms) (*MAG Employer Database*).

Student Enrollment

The students of SMCC truly represent the diversity of its service area. Their multi-ethnic and cultural presences are strong evidence that SMCC fully engages its community. They have come to the college to earn credits toward university transfer (19.73 %), to advance in their careers (31.55%), and to engage in, and increase their knowledge of, areas of personal interest (21.12 %).

Nearly 81% of SMCC students are part time (80.6%) and 19.4% carry at least 12 credit hours per semester, qualifying them for full-time status. A majority of the college's students are female (61%), and 37% of the student body attends primarily at night. Sixty-seven percent of students are continuing SMCC students, 11% are former students, and, in spring 2008, 21.5% were students new to the college.

Table 1.2

	Enrollment Status		Gender		Ethnicity					
	Full Time	Part Time	Male	Female	Hispanic	White	Black	Asian	American Indian	Other
Spring 1999	20.8	79.2	37.9	59.4	51.2	22.0	16.1	1.4	3.1	6.2
Spring 2008	19.4	80.6	35.5	61.0	38.2	31.3	15.6	4.6	4.6	5.6

The significant changes are in the Hispanic (decrease), Asian (increase), and American Indian (increase) populations.

More than 70% of SMCC's student enrollment is first generation college students; approximately 20% have limited English language proficiency; 12% are enrolled in developmental writing, reading, or mathematics courses; and 48% receive federal financial aid (15.7% of those receiving loans).

Another trend worth noting is that SMCC's enrollment has steadily increased over the last nine years, showing only a decline in total head count between years 2002 and 2003, and between 2006 and 2007. Full Time Student Equivalency (FTSE) totals also increased each year from 1999 until 2006, when a 1% decrease occurred.

Table 1.3

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Head count	5105	5286	5764	7090	7045	7618	7814	8141	7890
Total FTSE	1440	1446	1514	1633	1839	2014	2094	2067	2052

South Mountain Community College Employees

In spring 2008, South Mountain Community College was home to 63 full-time faculty (RFP), 63 professional staff (PSA), and 35 Management, Administration, and Technology (MAT) employees. Fifty-three other full-time employees rounded out the total 214 Board approved employees working for the college. Employee diversity approximately mirrors that of the student population with 44% of all full-time employees self-identified as Anglo, 34% Hispanic, 16% African-American, and 9% as Asian/Pacific Islander or Native American. In the same semester (Spring 2008) SMCC employed 189 adjunct faculty who taught 55% of all courses.

Also worth noting for its impact on the college is its recent retirement “wave.” Employees who began serving with the college when it began in the late 1970’s and early ‘80’s are now ready for retirement. In the last five years 25 employees chose to retire, and in the next three to four years (through fiscal year 2011/12) 26 more employees will be eligible to make that choice. This natural employee turnover rate is contributing to the increasing environment of change within the institution.

District and College Governance

Governance of the Maricopa Community College District is facilitated by a chancellor and governing board that oversee all ten colleges. The governing board consists of five members from five precincts within Maricopa County. Board members serve staggered terms of six years each.

The Governing Board meets on the second Tuesday of each month for a study session strategic conversation, and on the fourth Tuesday of the month for its regular scheduled meeting, at which official actions are taken on agenda items.

The core of SMCC’s administrative team consists of the president, the vice president of academic affairs, the vice president of administrative services, and the vice president of student affairs. All associate deans, division chairs, the human resources coordinator, the director of marketing and public relations, and off-site and program directors/co-coordinators report directly to one of these four administrators. SMCC’s organizational chart can be found in Chapter 3.

The college’s instructional programs are divided into six academic divisions, each headed by an elected faculty division chair. These divisions include academic and occupational faculty. SMCC’s administrative and governance structures are detailed further as part of the response to Criterion 1.

Institutional Changes Since 1999

Leadership

In June 2001, after nine years with the college, Dr. John Cordova retired from the Office of President of South Mountain Community College. Dr. Kenneth Atwater, selected from candidates in a national search, accepted the college presidency in July of 2001. It is under his leadership that the college presently thrives.

South Mountain's leadership structure in 1999 consisted of President, Dean of Instruction, and Dean of Administrative and Student Services. It has been changed to more effectively manage the expanding needs of the college. The position of "Dean of Administrative and Student Services" was separated into two positions: "Dean of Administrative Services" and "Dean of Student Services." Following the arrival of a new President in 2001, in 2004/05 a district assessment was done and all "Dean" titles were changed to "Vice President." Currently, the top strata of college administration includes the offices of President, Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA), Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA), and the Vice President of Administrative Services (VPAS).

In January 2003, Dr. Joyce Elsner was hired as Vice President of Administrative Services, joining the administrative team of Dr. Ken Roberts (VPAA) and Dr. Kay Martens (VPSA). In June 2005, Dr. Roberts retired and was replaced on the administrative team by Dr. Linda Lujan.

Student Services Leadership

In order to refocus college-wide efforts to enhance student retention and support increased enrollment, as well as to better align with the college Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, SMCC implemented a leadership structure reorganization of Student Services in the fall of 2007.

With the retirement of the Dean of Enrollment Services in 2007, the college was able to create two Associate Dean positions: one for Enrollment Services, and one for Student Development. The Associate Dean for Enrollment Services maintains alignment with the college enrollment management model and supervises the departments of Registration and Records, Financial Aid, Assessment, and Advisement and Recruitment. The Associate Dean of Student Development provides direction for Student Life and Leadership, Service Learning, New Student Orientation, Career Services, Disability Services, Childcare Services, and chairs the college retention task force.

Academic Division Realignment

Also implemented as a method of accommodating future college growth, supervisory responsibility, and increased efficiency, the college's three original academic divisions were reorganized into six. In the spring of 2006, the faculty senate leadership, in consultation with the college president and vice

president for academic affairs, began an analysis of the college's division structure. After extensive review and analysis, the faculty leadership proposed a modification to the existing structure of three academic divisions and two independent departments.

The departments and programs contained by the college's three original divisions, "Communication, Fine Arts and Developmental Studies", "Information Technology, Business and Social Sciences", and "Mathematics, Science, and Engineering" were reorganized into the following new academic divisions:

1. Division of Language Arts-English, ESL, Reading, and Foreign Languages
2. Division of Math, Science, and Engineering
3. Division of Business and Information Technology
4. Division of Communication, Fine Arts, and Social Sciences
5. Division of Counseling, Health, and Wellness
6. Division of Library and Teaching & Learning Center

The proposed division realignment was put to the faculty for a vote in fall 2006 per the college plan, and passed by a majority. The proposal was accepted by the college president and elections were subsequently held for the three new Division Chair positions. The realignment became effective July 1, 2007. (The college plan is in the [Resource Room](#).)

Facilities Expansion

Since the 1999 Higher Learning Commission visit, the remainder of funds from a successful bond initiative in 1994 were used to build the Student Enrollment Services (SES) building, to build the existing two-story Technology Center and Computer Commons area, and to re-stucco all of the existing buildings on the main campus. Also, in the fall of 2003, SMCC added a \$10 million Performing Arts Center (PAC) to the college main campus. The 43,000 square foot center is divided into three separate buildings: 1) the performance hall which includes a lobby, 350-seat theater, and stage; 2) a building for "back-of-house" functions such as dressing rooms, make-up room, and green room, and 3) a multi-use building housing a 100-seat "black box" theater, 75-seat dance studio, future recording studio, multipurpose classrooms, and faculty/administrative offices. The Performing Arts Center has won national and international architectural awards and acclaim for its innovative design and use of materials.

The 2004 MCCCCD \$951 million dollar bond initiative was created to fund improvements on or adjacent to existing campuses, as well to buy land for future development. Using SMCC's share of these bond monies, two major land purchases have been made in anticipation of creating a permanent SMCC presence in the communities of Ahwatukee and Laveen. The 5.8 acre Ahwatukee parcel purchased in January 2007 for \$2,750,000 will eventually host a permanent building for the Ahwatukee Foothills Center currently operating in leased space. The 43 acre \$8,016,000 purchase of land in Laveen is

a major step in establishing increased higher educational opportunities for SMCC's neighbors to the west. Construction on these sites is anticipated to occur in the next bond program in 2014.

The fiscal year 2007 brought even more expansion: the Life Science Annex, funded through a Title V grant and local tax dollars, was completed for use at the beginning of the Fall 2007 semester. The Desert Skies Telescope Observatory was added in May 2007, and in conjunction with Northern Arizona University, an additional classroom building was constructed at the northeast corner of the main campus, also completed for the beginning of the Fall 2007 semester.

Previously, in 2000, in partnership with the Town of Guadalupe, a new 4,600 square foot classroom, computer lab student services and administrative facility became the permanent home to SMCC's Guadalupe Center. That home quickly became too limited to accommodate the center's expanding services and growing enrollment, so in June 2008, using 2004 capital bond funds, nearly 5,000 more square feet of space, along with nearly 1,300 square feet of remodeled space, was opened for use. The expansion included a new non-lab science classroom, two new general-purpose classrooms, an assessment/tutoring center, a remodeled student services area and improved administrative and faculty office spaces, three outdoor zones for flexible use — including classes and a community room comprised of two classrooms.

In total, using grant funds, partnerships, and funds from the 2004 bond initiative, the following additions, enhancements, and remodeling projects have also been completed since 1999:

- Remodeling of the gymnasium to include mold reduction and HVAC improvement
- Complete remodeling of the gymnasium bathroom facilities and Physical Science Building restrooms
- Conversion of several racquetball courts into much needed storage areas
- Remodeling of Welcome Center, Administration and Technology Center
- Remodeling of Student Services Building
- Remodeling of Library to include Marketing and Public Relations Department and Technology Support
- Remodeling of Library space to accommodate TRIO program administration and student services
- Remodeling of Security Department facilities
- Removal of tennis courts to create more adequate parking for Athletics
- Resurfacing athletic track (2007)
- Remodeling and expansion of the Central Plant (spring 2009 completion)

All of these facilities changes were and have been planned for within the college strategic planning and budgeting processes. More detailed explanations of these plans and processes, as well as details concerning the planning of the college's upcoming 45,000 square foot SMCC/City of Phoenix Community Library can be found in Criterion 2.

Articulation Agreements

As part of the MCCCCD centralized curriculum structure, two-year/four-year articulation agreements are negotiated and managed through the district's Center for Curriculum, Transfer, and Articulation (CCTA) under the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs. An individual college may propose articulation agreements and work closely with the CCTA staff to develop those agreements. The final articulation agreement is shared by all ten colleges and is posted to the CCTA website and made available to students through college advisement and publications. Since the last self-study SMCC has proposed an articulation agreement with Western New Mexico University, another Hispanic –Serving Institution with a welcoming climate and reciprocal tuition agreements. This agreement has recently been completed.

Programs and Services

Degrees/Certificates/Programs of Study Added Since 1999

South Mountain Community College prides itself on its alignment with state, county, and service area workforce needs. With health care (including fitness training), education, management, engineering, and the IT trades listed among the 50 fastest growing career fields in Arizona and in Maricopa County (Arizona Department of Economic Security), SMCC is clearly positioning itself to provide opportunities for its constituents to take advantage of these economic opportunities.

Since 1999, the college has added 30 degree and certificate programs, in areas including but not limited to Early Childhood Development (Montessori), Advanced Behavioral Health Sciences, Information Technology, and Small Business/Entrepreneurship. A complete list of added programs can be viewed in the [Resource Room <www.maricopa.edu/academic/ccta/currie/progsm.php>](http://www.maricopa.edu/academic/ccta/currie/progsm.php).

2002 brought the Bilingual Nursing Fellows Program (BNFP), designed specifically to meet the growing metropolitan need for Spanish-speaking nurses. Also developed since the last accreditation visit is the Department of Engineering. Its primary intent is to provide an affordable and academically rigorous introductory Engineering program. The program is focused on the needs of transfer students planning to major in Engineering at a four-year university.

College faculty, and the SMCC/MCCCCD curriculum team, have been effective in keeping the college's academic programs contemporary and in support of the college's educational mission to serve "diversity," and "productive citizenship in an increasingly global and technological society."

College Student Service Programs Added Since 1999

In the last ten years, the college has continued to strive to serve the needs of many distinct groups and constituencies within its service area. Programs developed during the past ten years include but are not limited to:

- Summer Hoop of Learning Program for Native American Students
- Junior ACE- 8th, 9th, and 10th grade students
- Student Transfer with Educational Preparation (STEP)
- Upward Bound Program

Technology

Since the last HLC visit in 1999, South Mountain Community College and its Technology Department have worked diligently to keep pace with the technological expectations of area workforce trends as well as those of university academia. The following list represents improvements made which significantly impact students, faculty, and staff.

- Built Technology Center (classrooms, publicly accessible Computer Commons, Teaching and Learning Center, faculty offices and off-site center classroom computer labs)
- Deployed college-wide, server-based computing, including centralized security; file and print servers; automated backups, updates and software distribution; file sharing; and standard desktop images
- Implemented Blackboard Course Management System (District-wide)
- Launched new SMCC Public Website
- Extended standardized presentation systems (digital projectors, pad cameras, instructor A/V stations) to 85% of all classrooms
- Deployed pilot VoIP phones
- 2006-2009 begin and complete college wireless access
- Standardized classroom layouts, software, systems and technology
- District deployed PeopleSoft Student Information System rollout
- Added Online Student Orientation
- Initiated Student Advising Sign-in and Tracking System

An entire list of SMCC College Technology upgrades and advancements can be found in the [Resource Room](#).

College Profile Summary

South Mountain Community College is proud of its nickname, “The College with a Heart.” The college is well-known for its desire to reach out to its communities, develop strong partnerships with those communities, and to care deeply for each student and their individual educational goals. In a community survey conducted in spring 2008, community members shared what they felt were distinguishing characteristics of SMCC:

- “It is big enough to get the job done, yet small enough to make education relevant.”
- “[The college] actively seeks diverse perceptions.”
- “The intense desire to reach out to the minority and the economically challenged youth.”
- “SMCC encourages a very diverse and in many ways under served part of our community to enter this college.”

As this chapter suggests, the college is in the process of significant change on many levels, but this change is directed by a clear understanding that it must continue to serve equally its original South Phoenix constituents as well as those new to the college service area. This vision of service is the very core of South Mountain Community College’s past, present, and future successes.



SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Chapter 2



Accreditation History and the Self-Study Process

South Mountain Community College was granted candidacy for accreditation status with the North Central Association (NCA) in 1980. In 1982, the college underwent a biennial evaluation, a “mini-self-study,” for continuing candidacy, resulting in the decision by founding college president, Dr. Raul Cardenas, to seek accreditation during the 1983-84 academic year. Since that first cycle leading to full accreditation, the college has maintained continuous accreditation, with NCA requesting one progress report on the college’s “response to its changing service area” in Cycle 2, and two progress reports, one on Program Review Process and one delineating a comprehensive college Technology Plan, in 2002 (Cycle 3).

Cycle 1

- Self-study: 1982-83
- Visit: March 5-7, 1984
- College received full accreditation for a 5 year period.

Cycle 2

- Self-study: February, 1987-August, 1988
- Visit: February 5-8, 1989
- College received accreditation for a 10 year period with one progress report due in February, 1994.

Cycle 3

- Self-study: January 1997-August 1998
- Visit: March 8-10, 1999
- College received 10 year accreditation with 2 reports, due in July, 2002.

Current Cycle

- Self-Study: January 2007-December 2008
- Visit: April 8-10, 2009
- Commission review: June, 2009

Response to the Challenges from the Cycle 3/1999 Visit

Challenge #1: *“The college should more clearly differentiate between its statement of purposes and its statement of mission.”*

In April 2003, a committee was formed at the annual SMCC Strategic Planning Retreat for the purposes of reviewing and rewriting South Mountain Community College’s Mission and Vision documents. The mission statement itself was streamlined in wording with focus placed on accommodating the specific recommendations from the 1999 HLC visiting team. The committee also later revised the college vision statement to be congruent with the mission, and added the six college core values. The 2003 versions of the vision, mission, and values documents are the ones currently used to focus college efforts and can be read in Chapter 3 (Criterion 1) or at <http://about.southmountaincc.edu/about/visionmissionvalues/>.

Challenge #2: *“The team had a concern about the lack of a more focused effort to reach internal constituencies with the NCA’s call for third-party comment.”*

For the current Self-Study, South Mountain Community College solicited third party comments by announcing requests in the SMCC web page, through advertisement in local newspapers (*South Mountain District News; South Mountain Villager; Arizona Republic, regional edition*), and through an email to the DL-SMC employees. Comments from advisory councils affiliated with SMCC were also solicited.

Challenge #3: *“There is a need to create a culture of systematic research and formal review going beyond course/program enrollments. The college has no routine, systematic process for reviewing academic programs and services to determine if they are accomplishing their purposes . . .”*

Since the 1999 HLC site visit, development, systematic implementation, and continuous refinement of SMCC’s Program Review process has occurred. In fall 2000, a committee was convened to address the college’s need for a unified system of research and program review. After some struggle to define “programs” at SMCC, the committee initially chose to identify “programs” by course prefixes, but

there was still concern about the scope of this definition.

During the following academic year (2001-02), the Program Review Committee reconvened and redefined “programs” according to the core and awareness areas of the Arizona General Education Core (AGEC). The core areas are:

- First Year Composition
- Literacy and Critical Inquiry
- Mathematical Studies
- Humanities and Fine Arts
- Social and Behavioral Sciences
- Natural Sciences

And the awareness areas are:

- Cultural Diversity in the United States
- Global Awareness
- Historical Awareness

In addition, separate programs including Dynamic Learning, Achieving a College Education (ACE), English as a Second Language, Storytelling, and Developmental Education would be considered. The Program Review Committee proposed a two-phase process:

Phase I: Designed to provide an overall picture of a given occupational or academic instructional program, this phase, and its resulting report, would encompass the areas of “enrollment trends, facility use patterns, faculty and staffing, student completions and performance, and fiscal considerations data,” gathered from the two most recent fall semesters (*SMCC Progress Report, 2002*). Phase I reporting would occur each year.

Phase II: According to Phase II, every fifth year a program would undergo a more thorough, in-depth evaluation using the data from the previous four Phase I reports as well as from Fall semester surveys of students, graduates, and/or employers. Information gathered about full-time student equivalency (FTSE) as compared to full-time teaching equivalency (FTTE), future facility needs, community partnerships supporting the program, recruitment and retention efforts by faculty, outcomes assessments performed as part of the evaluation, and strengths and challenges associated with delivery of the program (*SMCC Progress Report, 2002*).

This plan proved to be impractical and cumbersome. Faculty cited these concerns:

- The review reports incorporated a great deal of quantitative data but lacked equal evaluation of that data and little qualitative data.
- The review form did not cover all the dimensions of a program.
- The definition of “programs” as used in the process was still problematic.

- The methods of data collection were perhaps limited and unreliable.
- Data interpretation, and whether or not the data was being used to improve program quality, was also limited and unreliable.

In fall 2005, the new Vice President of Academic Affairs called a Program Review Task Force made up of the VPAA and six faculty members to review the struggling current program review process. After refining the statistical methods for calculating the data, the decision was made to go forward for one more year with the existing process. However, faculty continued to express the concerns noted above. It was also felt that the two SMCC complementary processes (Program Review and Institutional Effectiveness/Academic Assessment) were disconnected and neither process provided results that could be used for program improvement.

In 2006-2007, a new Academic Program Review/Assessment of Student Learning (APRASL- pronounced “appraisal”) committee redefined and regrouped college programs for evaluation purposes into the following categories:

- **Transfer Programs** (AA, AS, and AGS)
- **Stand Alone Occupational/Academic Programs** (Behavioral Health, Bilingual Education, Bilingual Nursing, CISCO, Dynamic Learning, Early Childhood, ESL, Information Technology, Montessori, and Storytelling)
- **Developmental Programs** (English, ESL, Mathematics, and Reading), and
- **Learning Sites, Support Services, and Resources** (Achieving a College Education (ACE), Ahwatukee Center, Counseling and Professional Development, Guadalupe Center, Honors, Laveen, Learning Assistance Center/Academic Excellence Center, Library, Life-long Learning, Teaching and Learning Center, and Workforce Development).

The original report form also was improved, establishing eight areas (instead of the previous four) to consider. This change required a significantly more in-depth look at the given program, resulting in both more accurate program analysis and improved program forecasting (*Current Program Review Form*).

Improvements were made to the report rotation. Instead of asking all programs to write a review each year, certain programs report each year on a rotating basis. Reports are evaluated by the APRASL team prior to submission to the VPAA and College President.

For 2008-2009, the following programs are scheduled to conduct a program review:

- **Transfer**-Associate of General Studies, Art, Theater
- **Developmental**-English as a Second Language
- **Learning Sites/Support Services**-Learning Assistance Center (LAC), Achieving a College Education (ACE).

SMCC's program review process will continue to evolve and improve. To confirm the college's commitment to improving program review and assessment of student learning, and so that both assessment and program review would be under more focused direction, a Co-Chair of Academic Program Review and Assessment of Student Learning (APRASL) was named. This position was allocated six credit hours per semester reassign time and is responsible for working closely with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and for monitoring the APRASL process, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Challenge #4: “...[T]here needs to be a technology plan, complete with timelines, assigned responsibilities, and projected costs, to enable the college to manage the tremendous cost associated with technology and to accomplish this purpose more efficiently.”

In May 1999, immediately after the NCA site visit, the SMCC College Technology Committee completed its first extensive, formal technology plan, “*SMCC Information Technology Plan, 1999-2002*.” The plan included planning assumptions, goals, objectives and actions covering from one to five years. The plan also contained five-year cost projections for replacing technology assets, and sub-plans for developing newly constructed facilities, for technology asset reallocation/retirement, and for upgrading existing instructional facilities.

In the spring of 2001, driven by the desire to “tie technology planning to the college budget process, to expand the planning to a seven year scope, to better schedule technology development activities, and to respond more quickly to instructional technology needs.” The College Technology Committee recognized the need for a more structured technology planning process and decided to revise the existing technology plan. (*SMCC's Technology Progress Report 2002 link*)

The result of the committee's extensive and cooperative review process was the “Technology Master Plan (2003 and Beyond),” a comprehensive, multi-year plan detailing costs, timelines, and responsibilities. The new planning process clearly aligns with college and district strategic planning, supports the implementation of college goals, and conscientiously articulates the Technology Department's use of District and college funds. Since its approval in 2003, the plan has been reviewed and updated on an annual basis. The master plan, along with the “Computer Replacement Plan,” currently serves as the foundation of all technology-related purchases, training/development, and technological replacement decisions for the college. The “Technology Master Plan” and the “Computer Replacement Plan” can both be viewed in the [Virtual Resource Room](#).

The Self-Study Process

Establishing Leadership

South Mountain College's current cycle of self-study began in October, 2006 when the Vice President of Academic Affairs appointed a willing faculty member to the Self-Study Steering Committee Chairmanship. Two other members, one faculty member as "Project Writer," and one Administrative Director as "Student Services Liaison," joined the Steering Committee Chair to complete the "core" of the steering committee. The rest of the steering committee membership was then identified and their roles defined:

Steering Committee Member	Role in Self-Study Process
Dr. Teresa Leyba Ruiz, Mathematics faculty	Self-Study Chair
Chris Haines, Director of Athletics	Student Services liaison; MAT (Management) employee group liaison
Sara Kinsey, English faculty	Project Writer
Mike Lewis, Director of College Technology Services	Technology Department liaison
Dr. Linda Lujan, Vice President of Academic Affairs	Liaison to President's executive team; Academic Administrative guidance and support
Dr. Joyce Elsner, Vice President of Administrative Services	Liaison to President's executive team; Administrative Services liaison
Robert Price, Director of Marketing and Public Relations (Joined in Spring 2008)	Marketing (Publishing) and Public Relations liaison

The role of the Steering Committee would be to oversee the college's self-study process by providing strong process planning and organization, and to provide adequate guidance and support for the Criterion Committee chairs. An equally important steering committee role was to create and maintain college enthusiasm throughout the entire self-study process. The Project Writer worked with campus graphics personnel to design the logo of a compass with "South" central to the design, and the Steering Committee selected the theme, "Charting Futures, Connecting Worlds," to express the student-centered mission of the college. In addition to committing to twice-monthly meetings during the self-study process, steering committee members attended the annual HLC conference in April, 2007, and in April, 2008, in an effort to ensure a successful self-study process and outcome.

Criterion Committee Structure and Goal Setting

During the initial steering committee meetings, it was readily agreed that the Criterion Committee leadership and membership would be strongly inclusive of major employee groups: Professional Staff (PSA), Management/Administration/Technology (MAT), and Faculty (RFP). The vision for the self-study process was that, in addition to being a process of college examination and reflection, it would serve as a unifying experience for the college. It was also agreed that steering committee faculty would receive partial reassigned time for the length of the self-study process, and that funding would be provided to compensate faculty in criterion committee leadership roles.

It was also decided that this cross-representation required a unique structuring of Criterion Committee leadership roles. Rather than having a single individual appointed/selected as chairman of each criterion, it was decided that shared “chairmanship” would best serve the vision. This chairmanship role was titled “Project Manager.”

Three to four Project Managers (PM’s) were selected by the steering committee core to guide each criterion committee. They were chosen for their abilities to represent their employee groups, their leadership abilities, and how their areas of expertise connected to HLC criterion content. Once this list was compiled (18 in all), each individual was approached personally and asked if they would be willing to fulfill the defined role of Project Manager. All eighteen individuals agreed to participate in this role to begin in the Spring 2007 semester.

In March, 2007 the self-study leadership (Project Managers and Steering Committee members) determined the following self-study goals:

1. Improve academic assessment and curricular rigor
2. Improve college processes (including decision making)
3. Clearly assess college strengths and weaknesses
4. Strengthen college unity, relationships, and lines of communication
5. Continued progress with establishing a positive SMCC community identity, and
6. Exiting the self-study with a unified vision for the college’s future.

Involving the College and the Community

In January, 2007, the steering committee held a Kick-Off event at the campus All Employee Convocation. The South Mountain Community College self-study logo and theme were revealed as well as the now-established self-study committee structure. Employees were “tuned-in” to the accreditation purposes of the self-study process, and to the fact that all efforts would be made in alignment with the mission to provide excellence and success for all SMCC students.

At the post-convocation luncheon, each Criterion Project Manager group “advertised” their criterion, explaining its focus and its components. When each group had completed their “pitch”, all employees at the luncheon chose a criterion committee on which to serve. This self-selection worked to create strong college-wide “buy-in” to the total self-study process as well as clearly achieving the college’s cross-representation-of-employee-groups vision.

Throughout the self-study process, college-wide events were held to create and maintain HLC Self-Study awareness. A complete list of these events can be viewed in the [Virtual Resource Room](#).

In addition to college-wide events, self-study newsletters were distributed to all college employees bimonthly (*Self-Study News*); community advisory groups were briefed each semester on SMCC’s self-study progress; HLC Self-Study updates were included in the South Mountain College’s bimonthly online newsletter, *Messenger*; a web page was dedicated to Accreditation; and regular updates were made by HLC steering committee members at all President’s Leadership Cabinet, President’s Advisory Council, Academic Team, Strategic Planning, Faculty Senate, Professional Staff Association, and MAT meetings and retreats.

Spring 2009 events are planned to involve students in college self-study awareness.

Conducting the Self-Study

In early March 2007, Mary Breslin, Higher Learning Commission liaison to South Mountain Community College, visited the college and jump started the self-study process. Ms. Breslin met with the steering committee, all criterion groups, and the all-Project Managers group to help clarify the self-study process; and, because the Commission had made changes to the format and content of the evaluation criteria since the 1999 self-study, to help clarify the primary aims and requirements of the new process and of the self-study report.

Also in March 2007, Project Managers led their committees into the task of understanding their respective criterion and components, and guided gathering component evidence-gathering. Regular monthly Steering Committee/Project Manager meetings facilitated the clarification of issues and concerns as they surfaced in the process.

Criterion committees collected information from a wide variety of college and community as well as from activities and instruments specifically designed/used for the self-study. These instruments included:

- Student participation in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) (spring 2007)
- Electronic All Employee surveys addressing all five criteria were conducted (fall 2007)

- A community survey was conducted in fall 2007 and spring 2008
- Shorter surveys were designed and conducted by several criterion committees

Results from all of these documents/instruments have been included in the self-study report, and both the results and the documents/instruments themselves can be located in the virtual resource room, on-campus resource rooms.

Writing the Report

Criterion committees collected component data and submitted it to their respective Project Managers. PM's then compiled the data and presented it, along with their evaluation of the data's significance, in the form of "Evidence reports." Evidence reports were submitted to the steering committee in late March of 2008.

The steering committee reviewed each criterion Evidence Report, and met with each criterion group of PM's to offer feedback and ask for more specific analysis/rewriting. Revised drafts of the evidence reports were given to the Project Writer to be compiled into the self-study report. Report chapters, upon completion, were sent to the college graphic design specialist for formatting and graphic design. A complete first rough draft was submitted to all steering committee members and PM's for clarifications. A revised Self-Study Report draft was created, and final proofreading and formatting followed. The finished document was published in January, 2009, and submitted to the Higher Learning Commission in February before the site team visit in April.

Summary of Self-Study Process

The self-study process used at SMCC required the involvement of individuals from across the college. The Steering Committee believes that the strength of the process was the cross-section of voices involved in gathering evidence, and that college-wide involvement resulted in a highly valuable self-study. The biannual convocation presentations, the HLC newsletters, and the seven faculty-staff development events served to keep the process of reaccreditation in the forefront of the college's focus.

As South Mountain Community College completes the formal self-study and prepares for the site team's visit, faculty and staff are confident that the findings of this self-study are candid and accurately represent the college's strengths and challenges.



SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Chapter 3

Criterion 1 Mission and Integrity

Criterion 1:

South Mountain 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.

South Mountain Community College's strong sense of integrity comes from the fact that it aligns its actions with its publicized vision, mission, and values statements. The college mission statement proclaims that the college will provide quality higher education to its diverse communities; it does. The statement says the college will do so in a caring way, one that "fosters student development, and supports productive citizenship;" a day spent on campus speaking with students and/or employees will convince any visitor that the college is indeed a very caring institution with the success of its students at the center of its design. And the mission recognizes that the students of SMCC are, ultimately, part of a much larger global community; college programs and services point directly to the fact that the college is committed to student preparation for successful and positive participation in that larger community.



The college declares “integrity” as one of its values, second only to “excellence in teaching, learning, and service”, and the evidence presented in this chapter will serve to support that the college operates wholly in line with its ideals.

Component 1a:

South Mountain Community College mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization’s commitments.

SMCC’s vision, mission, and value statements demonstrate the college’s clear sense of purpose, and the ideals promoted in them are fulfilled through college structures, policies, and processes. The ideals in these documents are realized through SMCC’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 are designed to complement, the mission and values articulated by the governing board and by the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). *(Virtual Resource Room: MCCCCD 2008-09 Strategic Plan.)*

The South Mountain Community College vision, mission, and value statements, most recently revised in 2003, embody the essence of what the college is and does. The three individual components of the mission documents begin with the vision statement—a concise and straightforward statement comprised of four verbs and four nouns, which define, in broad terms, the college’s desired role within the community:

SMCC Vision Statement

“South Mountain Community College

- Educates minds
- Transforms lives
- Touches hearts, and
- Builds community”

Then, the mission statement more specifically details SMCC’s vision by specifying the academic services provided by the college: seven key areas of learning that provide the framework for all of SMCC’s academic and community commitments and offerings.

SMCC Mission Statement

“South Mountain Community College provides quality higher education for our diverse community. We create a caring teaching and learning environment that fosters student development and supports productive citizenship in an increasingly global and technological society.

Our purpose is to meet these needs by offering:

- General education courses
- Transfer programs
- Occupational education and career development
- Continuing education
- Developmental studies and English as a Second Language
- Cultural, civic, and social events
- Academic support and student services”

Finally, the Values statement defines the core values of the college, distilled into six different aspect categories.

SMCC Values Statement:

“We are inspired and guided by our core values:

- Excellence in teaching, learning and service
- Integrity as the foundation for actions
- Inclusiveness of people and ideas
- Collegiality, respect and cooperation
- Creativity, leadership and innovation
- Nurturance of self, others and our community”

These three documents, both separately and as complete guideposts for the college, clearly verbalize the college’s complete dedication to serving the community, honoring the whole student, and providing excellence in teaching and learning.

Dissemination of Mission Documents

Because of the concise nature of the mission documents, they are easily integrated into a wide array of publications, including the college catalog, course schedules, and student handbooks. In addition, they are easily found on the college website using the first link in the home page navigational listing. SMCC’s mission documents are easily found and visible to students, employees and visitors to the college, and they provide a consistent public reminder of the fundamental ideas that guide our college. More than 200 8.5” x 11” color posters featuring the college vision, mission and values statements are posted in all classrooms, meeting rooms, and public use facilities on the SMCC main campus and its branches.

In the 2007 SMCC All Employee Survey, 89% of SMCC faculty, 75% of SMCC non-faculty employees and 75% of SMCC adjunct faculty agreed or strongly agreed that SMCC’s mission is publicized widely.



Component 1a Summary

The mission documents of South Mountain Community College clearly articulate the college vision, mission, and values. All three of these documents are publicly displayed at the main campus and at the college's centers in Ahwatukee and Guadalupe. The documents are also readily available in college publications and on the college website ([SMCC Vision Mission Values](#)).

Component 1b:

In its mission documents, South Mountain Community College recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

Central to South Mountain Community College is its awareness of, and enormous pride in, the ethnically rich, and culturally, socially, and economically diverse communities it serves. The college's origin and history as the primary destination for higher education in the South Phoenix area continue to be at the core of the college's decisions and actions. Clearly aligned with that community allegiance, the college mission statement focuses its primary intent directly at the college's diverse student populations, and at their needs for educational, occupational, and personal enrichment, stating: "South Mountain Community College provides quality higher education for our diverse community."

Diversity of Learners

South Mountain Community College provides quality higher education for its diverse learners by offering programs and partnerships with other agencies to help ensure the academic success of students while enrolled at SMCC and also to help support their transfer to the university. Here is an example of some of the programs that the college offers for its diverse students.

Achieving a College Education (ACE) Program

ACE is a nationally recognized program that targets high school students who may not consider going to college and makes attaining a bachelor's degree an achievable goal. The program is designed to help students transition smoothly from high school to community college and on to a university and the completion of a bachelor's degree. ACE students are high school juniors and seniors concurrently taking college courses while still attending regular high school. A Junior Ace program has also been created, focusing on middle school students.

Arizona Agribusiness and Equine Center (AAEC) Charter High School

AAEC is a local charter high school and maintains a building located on the SMCC main campus. Nearly 200 junior and senior AAEC students (73% minority) enroll in college courses (dual enrollment), including many math, science, and engineering courses in preparation for university transfer. AAEC students average 20 college credit hours per student while in high school. Over the past four years,

sixty-three AAEC students have graduated with both a High School Diploma and an Associates Degree from SMCC.

Upward Bound Program

SMCC's Upward Bound Program, federally funded through the U.S. Department of Education's TRIO program, began at SMCC in September 2007. Supported by a grant of nearly a million dollars, the four-year program is designed to prepare high school students for continuing into higher education from high school. A total of 50 freshmen and sophomores from local high schools participated in the program during 2007-2008.

TRIO-STEP Program

The Students Transfer with Educational Preparation (STEP) program was established at SMCC in 2005 through a TRIO-Student Support Services grant from the U.S. Department of Education. SMCC was awarded \$1.1 million for five years to provide 160 students with academic support services. The primary goal of STEP is to assist students in transferring to four-year institutions. The primary target market for STEP is at-risk students who might not otherwise succeed in the college or university environment.

SMCC Honors Program

The Maricopa District Honors Program was founded in AY 1981-1982, with college Honors Programs established on each of the campuses. This program is a response to community requests to enhance educational opportunities for students, to provide a climate of academic excellence both in the colleges and in the surrounding community, and to recognize and reward talented students and faculty.

In addition to academics, at SMCC, Honors students are encouraged to join Phi Theta Kappa and to participate in co-curricular activities such as service learning and leadership training.

Community Outreach Programs and Grants

South Mountain Community College often works as a connection point between middle and high school students and the college service area industries. The following initiatives, programs and grants have enabled many service area pre-college students to connect with local career possibilities.

- **Arizona Tech Prep**
- **Phoenix Union High School District "Science in the City"**
- **City of Phoenix Workforce Development**
- **Arizona Community Foundation (ACF) Project**

University Transfer Opportunities and Support Programs and Services

University Transfer and General Education are major considerations for SMCC students. Eighty-four percent of graduating SMCC students indicate that they are planning to transfer to a four-year college or university within the next year. In recognition of their academic goals, the college offers multiple transfer pathways.



District and statewide support and information for successful student transfer are also available from sources such as the District Curriculum website (*CTTA*), Arizona Transfer Articulation Support System (*ATASS*), the online Course Equivalency Guide (CEG) and Course Applicability System (CAS) <<http://www.aztransfer.com>>, and the District Academic Advisement Council website. All of this information is directly available to students.

Diverse Cultural, Civic, and Social Events

South Mountain Community College's International Intercultural Education (IIE) program provides college cultural events and is designed to help the college create a global awareness among students, faculty, and staff. The program supports the MCCC's strategic goal of participating fully in the global community with a sense of understanding and appreciation for the many cultural influences that affect our lives. In an effort to infuse diversity into college life, SMCC hosts various orientations and student events. These include a variety of multi-ethnic celebrations focusing on events, activities and art forms drawn from the African-American, Latin American, Asian-American and Native American cultures. The college also plays host to a variety of community events, including an annual Juneteenth celebration, the *Niños Seguros* health and safety fair for Spanish-speaking families, and an Eid ul-Fitr gathering for Valley Muslims in observation of the end of Ramadan.

Academic Support and Student Services

SMCC's Disability Resources and Services (DRS)

This office provides access and support to those students with a documented disability according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The DRS staff is also responsible for educating and monitoring college compliance of ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure that students, staff, and faculty interpret and follow specific guidelines according to the law (*Disability Resources*).

Veteran Services

Increasingly, returning veterans are finding a home at SMCC. The mission of Veteran Services at South Mountain Community College is to act as a liaison between the veteran student and the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purposes of certifying veteran educational benefits. The office serves as the primary contact in assisting veterans in completing the necessary paperwork to insure proper VA educational entitlements.

Student Clubs and Organizations

SMCC recognizes diversity through a variety of student clubs and organizations, which are presented more thoroughly in Criteria 4. Approximately 20 student clubs are supported through the office of Student Life and Leadership. These clubs represent the diversity of the student population at the college and sponsor events that provide cultural insight for the college community.

SMCC Recognizes the Diversity of Internal Constituents

Commitment to Diversity at the District Level

In order to recruit and retain a diverse faculty, MCCCCD supports the faculty-led Faculty of Color Recruitment and Retention Committee. As well, the Maricopa Faculty Internship Program is a district initiative created to foster a diverse faculty. The Maricopa Faculty Internship program helps ensure that the students will be served by faculty who reflect their diverse communities and who will also create an environment of equity and mutual respect.

The *MCCCCD Diversity Infusion Program* focuses on ensuring diversity in the curriculum and enhancing the ability of faculty to develop a positive learning experience that incorporates diversity issues and perspectives. Eleven SMCC faculty have been Diversity Infusion Program participants since its inception in 1998. SMCC has hosted several diversity infusion program workshops and exchanged projects through the district website.

District-wide specific constituency and interest groups have a voice in shaping MCCCCD diversity initiatives; these include the Asian Pacific Islander Association, Maricopa Association of Chicanos in Higher Education, Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Association, Maricopa Council on Black American Affairs, Rio Copa Toastmasters, United Tribal Employees' Council, and Women's Leadership Group. Constituency group web pages, missions, and activities can be found online <<http://www.maricopa.edu/employees/index.php>>.

SMCC's Commitment to Diversity at the College Level

In accordance with its mission, SMCC welcomes everyone to the college. The college is valued by the community for its efforts to be inclusive and was nationally recognized by the National Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) in 2005. Each year the college provides a variety of activities such as Hispanic Heritage Month; storytelling and jazz festivals; the Phoenix Symphony; an international/intercultural week; and African-American recognition week. The college sponsors a Hoop of Learning Program for Native American students and participates annually in "Hands Across the Border Partners" with Mexico. In September 2008, Ballet Arizona used SMCC as a venue for their popular "Ballet Under the Stars" event. This performance was free and invited everyone to experience a ballet performance. The event was so successful that Ballet Arizona is planning to repeat their performance in 2009.

Hiring Practices

Hiring practices at SMCC promote diversity among faculty and staff. The college adheres to district guidelines requiring that screening committees include diverse ethnic and gender representation, as well as representatives from different employee groups. The SMCC Screening Committee Handbook can be found in the *Resource Room*. As one of ten Maricopa County Community Colleges, SMCC also follows Equal Opportunity Employer/Affirmative Action Guidelines. To further ensure that students will be served by a diverse faculty, faculty job descriptions often include a statement requiring that candi-



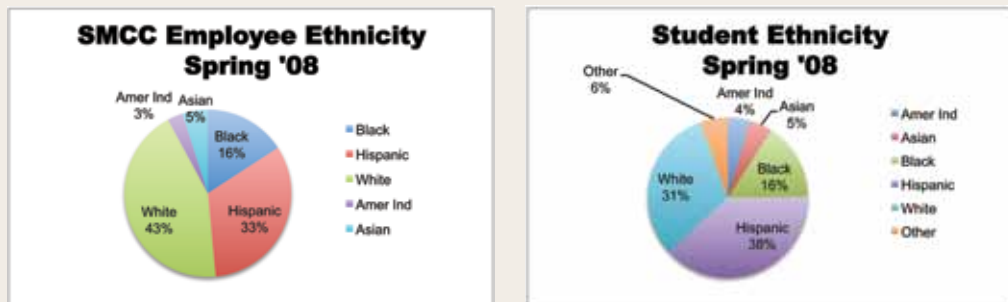
dates have experience working with diverse populations. MCCCCD job descriptions can be found online <<http://www.maricopa.edu/hrweb/wagesal/jdindex/index.htm>>.

Each of the Maricopa Community Colleges is required to discuss faculty hiring diversity annually with the Chancellor. This discussion describes the efforts each college has made in the recruitment and development of diverse applicant pools for each vacant faculty position announced by the college.

Diverse Faculty and Staff

Employee demographics parallel student and/or service area demographics. SMCC had, as of Spring 2008, 214 Board Approved Employees of whom 44% were Anglo, 33% Hispanic, 16% African American, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 3% Native American. This demographic is compared with Spring 2008 student ethnicity in the charts below.

Chart 3.1



College Diversity Coordinator

SMCC supports the role of a College Diversity Coordinator. Representative duties of the diversity coordinator include:

- Chairing the college diversity committee
- Organizing or supporting diversity related activities and events
- Serving as a resource to “diversity across the curriculum” projects
- Working with librarians to develop a bibliography of diversity-related books, videos, publications, and other resources
- Aligning coordination with district diversity programs

SMCC Recognizes the Diversity of its Communities and of the Larger Society It Serves

All of the South Mountain Community College mission documents emphasize inclusion of people and ideas as a key value of the college. Specifically, the third of six SMCC value statements states that the college shall value “inclusiveness of people and ideas.” Also, the SMCC mission, vision, and value

statements all recognize contributions to the greater society served by the institution. “Builds community” is one of four ideas voiced in the college Vision Statement, and the college Mission Statement; it states that SMCC “supports productive citizenship in an increasingly global and technological society.” Among the programs to be offered, as stated in the Mission Statement, are “civic events.” And finally, “Nurturance of self, others and our community” is the sixth of six SMCC Value Statements. The following details are offered as evidence that South Mountain Community College recognizes and values both the diversity of its communities and that diverse society it serves.

Diverse Curricula

The 2008-2009 SMCC Catalog explains the importance of diversity in the general education program:

General education opportunities encourage students to:

- Recognize and respect the beliefs, traditions, abilities, and customs of all people and all cultures;
- Consider the ethical implications of your decisions;
- Work cooperatively and respectfully with others to serve their communities

All MCCC degree and certificate programs help students to better understand themselves and their relationships with others in a richly diverse world through general education core and distribution requirements such as: Global Awareness, Historical Awareness, and Cultural Diversity in the United States. Learning community titles at SMCC also illustrate how the college addresses diversity, such as “Creating Community in a Changing World” and “Cultural Diversity in Education.”

Variety of Course Formats

SMCC recognizes a diverse students body’s need for a variety of course formats, so the college offers several alternatives to courses that meet for 150 minutes per week, including:

- Learning communities/ “block” courses
- Seamless lecture-lab courses
- Hybrid courses
- Accelerated courses
- Late start classes
- Online courses



Global Awareness and International Education

SMCC faculty have developed instructional initiatives aimed at broadening student awareness of local and global issues. These initiatives both complement and promote the infusion of diversity into the curriculum. Focusing on a coherent theme, college-wide events such as guest speakers, movies, jazz concerts, performing arts plays, photo exhibits, art shows, science fairs, and sporting events invite learning outside the classroom, in addition to fostering connections across the curriculum—as many faculty integrate the college theme into their courses.

SMCC also sponsors a range of International Intercultural Education (IIE) program events and activities. (These are addressed more specifically in Chapter 6-Criterion 4.) The International Program’s mission “aims to create an environment with opportunities that encourage global citizenship and promotes cultural understanding and appreciation.” Additionally seven SMCC faculty have participated in the International Intercultural Study Abroad Program <<http://students.southmountaincc.edu/Services/InternationalEducation/>>.

Component 1b Summary

South Mountain Community College does much to recognize and encourage the diversity of its learners, other constituents, and the society it serves. From providing a variety of diverse academic and support programs and services, to hiring and retaining a diverse faculty and staff, SMCC reinforces its commitment to “provide . . . higher education for our diverse community.”

Component 1c:

Understanding of and support for the mission pervade South Mountain Community College.

Because the college mission documents were revised by a college-wide representative committee, the majority of college employees do understand and support the mission statement of the college. According to the *All Employee Survey* conducted in fall 2007, SMCC faculty and staff claim confidence in their understanding of the college mission statement.

- 100% of SMCC faculty indicate an understanding of SMCC’s mission statement and vision statements, while 98% of SMCC’s faculty indicates an understanding of SMCC’s value statements.
- 97% of SMCC’s non-faculty employees indicate an understanding of SMCC’s mission and vision statements, while 93% have an understanding of SMCC’s value statements.

- 100% of SMCC’s adjunct faculty indicates an understanding of SMCC’s mission, vision and value statements.
- 98% of SMCC faculty, 95% of SMCC non-faculty employees and 100% of SMCC adjunct faculty believe their department supports the SMCC mission documents.
- 100% of SMCC faculty and adjunct faculty and 98% of SMCC non-faculty employees understand how their jobs support the college mission.

College Mission is Clearly Supported through College Strategic Planning

Over the last four years, South Mountain Community College has worked stringently on unifying, clarifying and making efficient its strategic planning processes. After change occurred in the MCCC strategic planning process in 2006, the college more closely assessed its own planning processes and found that although sufficient planning was occurring across the college, planning cycles were not necessarily in synch or clearly connected to the college mission. Since that time, significant efforts have been made to more clearly align all college planning processes with the college mission statement; one can clearly see the college’s annual reevaluation and adjustment of its goals in the strategic planning documents from 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09. ([Virtual Resource Room](#)) See Criterion 2 for a full account of the Strategic Planning process.

Component 1c Summary

Connecting SMCC’s strategic planning goals and priorities directly to the wording of the college mission statement has resulted in more focused planning processes college-wide, as well as a greater awareness among all employees as to the tenets of that statement. This shared understanding supports the “wholeness,” or integrity of the institution.

Component 1d:

South Mountain Community College’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

College Governance and Collaboration

The administrative structure of SMCC is efficient and promotes leadership and collaborative processes. The executive team of administrators is composed of the President, Vice President of Administrative Services, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Vice President of Student Affairs. The format of three vice presidents allows all units of the college to be organized under a vice president.



The Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) is involved in planning for academic delivery of courses and has in place a committee that meets several times a semester and includes all division chairs and heads of different departments. The VPAA also serves on the District Curriculum Committee (DCC) along with a faculty member and also works indirectly with District instructional councils on which SMCC has faculty representation for each instructional area (*District Instructional Councils*).

The Vice President of Administrative Services oversees the college budget, the college technology departments, and works closely with employee groups such as Maintenance and Operations, College Safety, Crafts and others having to do with the effectiveness of running a campus for students and employees.

The Vice President for Student Affairs works with all student services departments to ensure students are being served in a way that effectively facilitates their registration, financial aid processing, enrollment testing, and advisement.

The current organizational chart for SMCC, illustrates how each unit aligns with each vice presidential office.

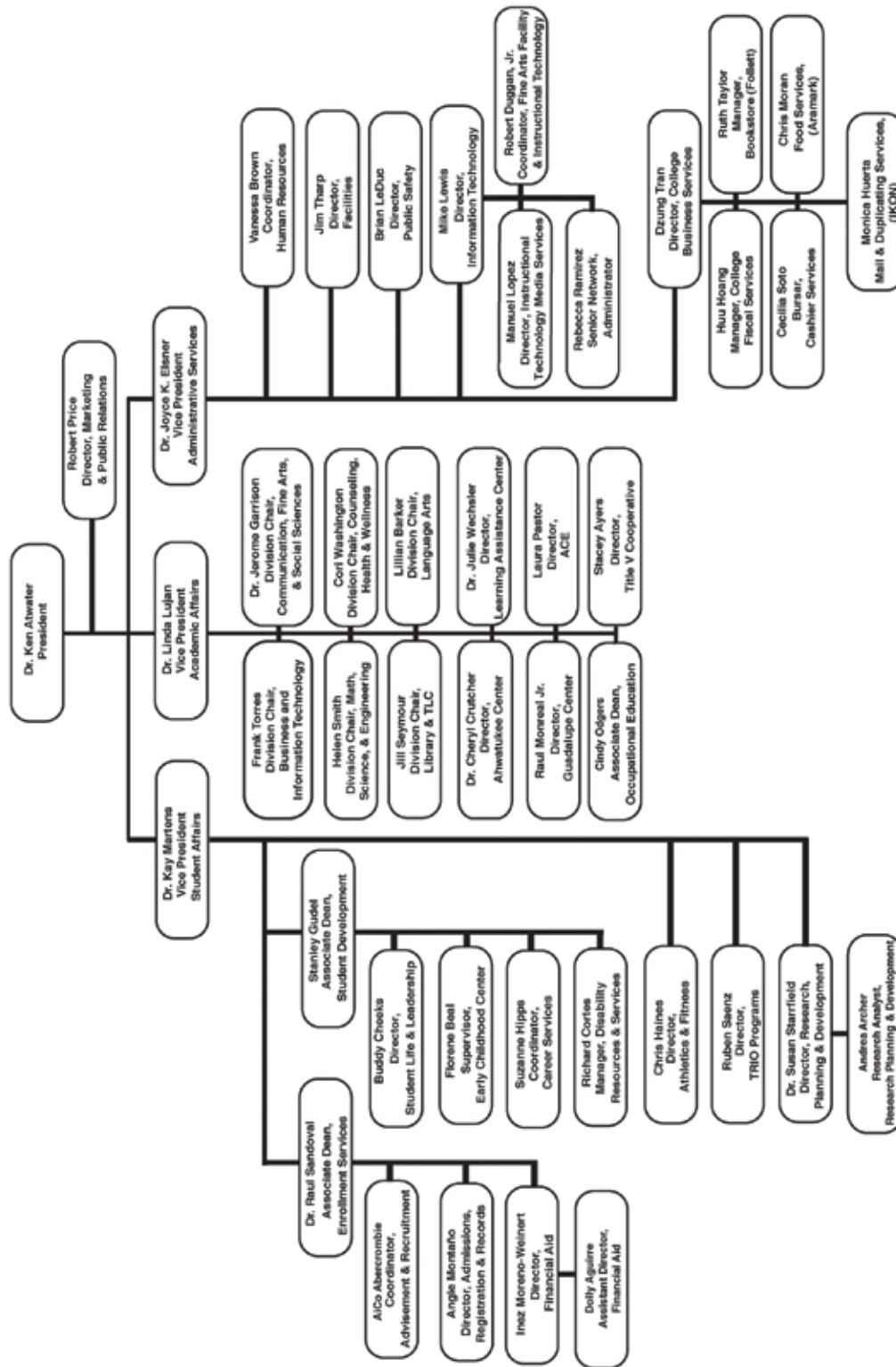
The SMCC President works closely with his Executive Team (all Vice Presidents) and his President's Staff (Vice Presidents, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, and the leadership of the personnel policy groups.) The President's Leadership Advisory Council includes Vice Presidents, Associate Deans, Division Chairs, and other managers for the college.

MCCCD supports the maintenance of seven policy groups: Chancellor's Executive Council (CEC); Managers, Administrators, Technology (MAT); Residential Faculty Policy (RFP); Professional Staff Association (PSA); and Maintenance and Operations (M&O), Crafts, and Safety. At SMCC, most of these groups are represented by its policy group president at the college president's staffing meetings, and at the biannual President's Leadership Advisory Council meetings.

President's Leadership Advisory Council

In 2007, at the recommendation of an assigned task force, the "President's Leadership Cabinet" was formally renamed the "President's Leadership Advisory Council." The purpose of this council is to "provide a broad campus perspective on issues of importance to the entire college. . ." This inclusive information sharing structure encourages college-wide collaboration between each of the college policy groups.

South Mountain Community College
Organizational Chart





Component 1d Summary

Clear governance and administrative structures at South Mountain Community College promote effective leadership as well as promoting collaboration between all four employee policy groups represented at the college.

Component 1e:

South Mountain Community College upholds and protects its integrity.

South Mountain Community College’s Mission Statement and core values, detailed in Component 1a, are clearly connected to those set forth by the Maricopa County Community College District. This close alignment of missions and values is the foundation of the college’s integrity.

SMCC’s Alignment with MCCCDC Mission and Values

Table 3.1

	MCCCDC Mission Elements							
SMCC Mission Elements	University Transfer	General Education	Developmental Education	Workforce Development	Student Development Services	Continuing Education	Civic Responsibility	Global Engagement
General Education		X						
Transfer Programs	X							
Occupational education and career development				X				
Continuing Education						X		
Developmental studies and English as a Second Language			X					
Cultural, civic, and social events							X	X
Academic support and student services					X			

Table 3.1 Cont.

SMCC Values	MCCCD Values							
	Community	Excellence	Honesty and Integrity	Inclusiveness	Innovation	Learning	Responsibility	Stewardship
Excellence in teaching, learning, and service		X				X		X
Integrity			X				X	
Inclusiveness				X				
Collegiality, respect, and cooperation	X							
Creativity, leadership, and innovation					X			
Nurturance of self, others, and our community	X							

Creating and Maintaining a Positive College Environment

South Mountain Community College has, as provided by Arizona state law and the District, clearly stated policies in place to maintain the safe and welcoming environment of the college. Specific policies concerning workplace violence prevention, and sexual harassment, are included in the student handbook, college catalog, faculty and staff handbooks, in district policy manuals for all employee groups and through administrative regulations. These policies can be read at www.maricopa.edu/publicstewardship/governance/adminregs/adminregs_tac.php.

Maintaining a Clear Academic Misconduct Policy

Maricopa County Community College District has in place clear policy and due process in the case of student academic misconduct. The policy, which is published in all SMCC's college catalogs and student handbooks, addresses the topics of cheating, plagiarism, and excessive absences. The policy provides clear definitions of all academic misconduct terminology as well as detailing specific sanctions available for faculty use. According to the policy, "Students can appeal sanctions imposed for academic misconduct by following the instructional grievance process." Both the misconduct policy and the instructional grievance process can be viewed in the *Student Handbook*.

Maintaining Fiscal Responsibility

To keep our integrity high and to be fiscally sound, SMCC follows all MCCCD administrative regulations that outline business and operating procedures. SMCC has numerous partnerships within the public and private sectors, and maintains contractual services with external vendors for construction, consulting and other services. All contractual agreements require review by the District's General



Counsel, and approval by the Governing Board. In addition, SMCC takes extra steps to customize its own fiscal and cashing guidelines and procedures for our daily operation based on the MCCC administrative regulations. <[http://www.maricopa.edu/legal/search/Sm-admin-04/groups/Cashiers/Private/Cashier Information/Business Processes](http://www.maricopa.edu/legal/search/Sm-admin-04/groups/Cashiers/Private/Cashier%20Information/Business%20Processes)>.

Maintaining High Standards for Student Athletes

Policies are in place at SMCC to ensure that academic standards are met by all student athletes. The policies include a process to track the athlete's grades in all courses during the academic year. Students who are at risk of failing or of not meeting academic requirements are required to attend study sessions at the tutoring center, or a meeting is scheduled between the athlete, respective coach, and the instructor to determine which steps must be taken to ensure the athlete's success in the course. In addition, student athletes must maintain academic eligibility to compete, graduate, and/or transfer based on college and NJCAA rules.

The Blue Book: An Essential Guide for Maricopans

To maintain high standards of integrity, each year MCCC publishes "The Blue Book: An Essential Guide for Maricopans," which addresses policies and standards applicable to all employee groups. In addition, SMCC College Business Services (CBS) managers provide several training sessions annually relating to budget, fiscal policies, travel, procurement and cash handling procedures for SMCC's employees.

Within the district hiring process, SMCC follows the MCCC Human Resources policies and regulations. The SMCC/HR Coordinator works closely with CBS to ensure all hiring for SMCC is in compliance, including posting, screening, interviewing, and final selection. Hiring committees must have a gender and ethnicity balance. Screening committees at SMCC generally contain from four to six members. However, the committee may have more than six members depending on the posting position. The final two or three candidates may also have a second or third interview with a Vice President or the College President, contingent on the level of the position. Following that second interview, the final candidate may then be recommended for hire. The chair of the hiring committee completes the final paperwork and submits it to District HR. The job offer to the selected candidate comes from District Human Resources. Each new employee must attend a district-level employee orientation. SMCC also offers a nine-month series of monthly new employee orientation sessions, which are optional for newly hired staff and faculty.

The office of MCCC Ombuds Services was created in 2007. In the interest of accountability and responsiveness to constituents, Ombuds Services provides a way for members of the external community to address disputes and concerns regarding the Maricopa County Community College District.

Written and electronic information detailing the operation of this new program was disseminated to all SMCC personnel. <<http://www.maricopa.edu/ombuds/>>

Blue Ribbon Panel

On November 17, 2006, the Chancellor appointed a citizens' Blue Ribbon Panel on Internal Controls for Maricopa Community Colleges, reviewing internal controls over select business operations. As a result, a series of recommendations were developed to improve operations and better safeguard the public's assets. <<http://www.maricopa.edu/marketing/download/bribbon2-16-07.pdf>>. New regulations established by the Maricopa Community College District are incorporated promptly into SMCC business processes and integrated effectively into all procedures. <www.maricopa.edu/learn/programs/mandatorytraining/>. Disclosure statements are required from each employee; some are done annually, others by semester <www.maricopa.edu/disclosure/>.

A majority of SMCC's faculty and staff believe that the college demonstrates integrity through its actions and their relation to the college mission documents. *SMCC college-wide survey, Fall 2007.*

- 81% of Faculty say “Yes, we are conducting ourselves ethically” as a college.
- 85% of SMCC faculty and staff and 100% of adjunct faculty strongly agree, agree, or slightly agree that “SMCC’s actions are consistent with the mission.”
- 77% of faculty, 84% of adjunct faculty and 76% of staff feel that SMCC “upholds and protects its integrity,” while
- 81% of faculty, 83% of adjunct faculty and 71% of staff feel that the college “demonstrates a commitment to ethical behavior.”

Maintaining Efficient and Transparent Student Complaint Processes

Maricopa Community College administrative regulations, disciplinary processes and processes for student complaint resolution are made easily accessible to all students, faculty, staff and community members.

District regulations are compiled and published annually in the SMCC college catalog; and an edited version, highlighting those regulations specifically pertinent to students, is published in the SMCC student handbook. Sections on Academic Misconduct, Disciplinary Standards, the Student Code of Conduct, and hearing and appeal procedures are all contained within these publications.



Effective Crisis Management

Unfortunately, it often takes a crisis situation to surface the true nature of an organization. On a Thursday afternoon, July 24, 2008, such a crisis occurred on the main campus of South Mountain Community College when a former student escalated a personal conflict with a gun and wounded three people in the Computer Commons.

The responses of the Technology Center staff, students present, administrative leadership, and the campus safety department were immediate, intelligent, and compassionate. The college maintained its complete commitment to its community by continuing with classes on Monday morning, working closely with MCCCDC to provide a consistent media message, and to provide immediate counseling and support services to faculty, staff, and students in need.

More about the effect this event had on college safety processes is discussed in Chapter 4, but its reference in this criterion as evidence that South Mountain Community College “operates with integrity” is clearly warranted.

Component 1e Summary

Clearly aligning itself with the mission and values of MCCCDC, South Mountain Community College does much to uphold and protect its integrity. From maintaining and enforcing clear student policies and exhibiting strong fiscal responsibility, to complying with MCCCDC ethics training and Blue Ribbon disclosures, SMCC is an organization that demonstrates it values integrity. The college faculty and staff believe that SMCC conducts itself in an ethical manner, and the continued community support of the college is strong evidence of the college’s ability to maintain a high level of honesty and reliability.

Criterion 1 Summary

Over the last five years, since 2003 and the re-writing of South Mountain Community College's Vision, Mission, and Values Statements, the college has done much to clarify and unify the college in alignment with those statements. These efforts have given the college a stronger foundation, and in so doing, the ability to accommodate the many changes occurring both in its service area and internally. Unifying all college actions under the auspices of our mission has created the all-important framework necessary for any organization to flourish in the present, move successfully into the future, and meet the needs of our dynamic and changing communities. The evidence illustrated in this criterion clearly supports that SMCC operates with integrity, celebrates diversity, and maintains high standards of fiscal and legal responsibility.

Successes:

- The 2003 revision of college mission statement documents created a much needed basis for current and future college change and growth.
- The revised SMCC Vision/Mission/Values Statements much more clearly articulate the ideals at the heart of the college, particularly that of valuing all types of diversity.
- The college mission continues to place student success and educating the whole student at its core.
- Publicly stating the values held by the college more clearly guides our actions. Checking all college actions against those belief statements is a certain way to maintain the highest level of college-wide integrity.
- The role of South Mountain Community College continues to be an extremely important one to its constituents as the college continues to provide affordable access to learning opportunities to its diverse populations.
- The college mission statement ideals are strongly supported at all levels of the college.
- In times of crisis, the entire college (administration, faculty, staff, and students) acts in accordance with its positive guiding principles and maintains its highest level of integrity.
- The college maintains high standards of fiscal and legal responsibility.

Challenges:

- The values stated by the college mission documents include a statement concerning "excellence in learning;" yet SMCC, like many institutions, is still in process in defining how best to measure learning excellence and how to use



those results to inform continuous improvement. This is perhaps our biggest challenge and one we revisit in two other chapters.

- One of SMCC's mission statements focuses on developmental education, and our efforts have been well-intended, but overall MCCCDC retention and persistence rates of developmental students fall below national benchmarks. As an institution that traditionally has served unprepared students, SMCC has recently initiated efforts to improve its results.
- Like any complex organization, SMCC and the district struggle with effective communication strategies among and between various levels of our organizations. The current level of internal communication is viewed as a challenge by a number of our employees and we are focusing on ways to improve.
- SMCC's website is evolving and is not yet adequate to meet the needs of its current and potential students. The institution recognizes the importance of focusing on improving both content and navigation and will be committing resources toward improving this essential communication and marketing tool.

SMCC's culture is evolving and changing to effectively keep pace with both its internal and external constituencies. With this change have come some growing pains. Continued attention paid to the specific elements of our Mission Statement, and improved communication strategies and pathways, will keep the college's integrity, and constituent perception of that integrity, at the highest possible level.



SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Chapter 4

Criterion 2

Preparing for the Future

Criterion 2:

South Mountain 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.

Arizona's economy is, as is the case with most states in the nation, one that is struggling to reconcile the effects of a slow national economy with the needs of its citizens. The state legislature was faced with a \$1.8 billion shortfall in FY 2007 and expects a greater one in FY 2008. The 2007 budget shortfall has resulted in the state cutting \$13 million from community college funding, and more cuts are expected this year.

In October 2008, MCCCCD's Chancellor asked colleges to make cuts of 1% in general fund budgets for the coming spring semester (2009) and a 1% cut from the planned 2009/2010 budget. SMCC's president shared the Chancellor's directive with the college President's Leadership Advisory Council, and then directed the vice presidents to convene their teams to discuss and make recommendations for cuts. Each vice president brought her team's recommendations to an executive staff meeting at



which the president and vice presidents prioritized 2008-2009 reductions. SMCC eliminated 1% of the general fund (\$210,089) for spring 2009. The Chancellor has asked Maricopa colleges to anticipate additional cuts of 3% (\$617,726) and 10% (\$2,059,086) for FY 2009/2010. [Resource Room](#).

This economic trend, coupled with the changing nature of the college service area, is strong incentive for the college to make certain *all* of the college budgeting and planning processes are efficient and thorough enough to ensure the college's ability to serve its constituents well in good times and bad. This self-study process has surfaced evidence that the college's use of resources, and its planning processes and strategies, are enabling, and will enable, the college to continue to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to any challenges and opportunities occurring in the future. A set of guiding principles pertinent to making these budget cuts can be found in the Appendix.

Core Component 2a:

South Mountain Community College realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

As a college within the Maricopa County Community College District, South Mountain Community College is connected to the district-level strategic planning processes, so a brief discussion of those processes is critical to understanding planning at the college level.

MCCCD Strategic Planning

According to the [MCCCD Strategic Planning](#) website:

For Maricopa, the strategic planning process provides the framework to advance the district's mission, vision and goals; this is accomplished by each of the colleges/units specifically taking action to better meet the needs of students and the internal and external communities and thereby advance their individual college missions, visions and goals to serve students and the internal and external communities.

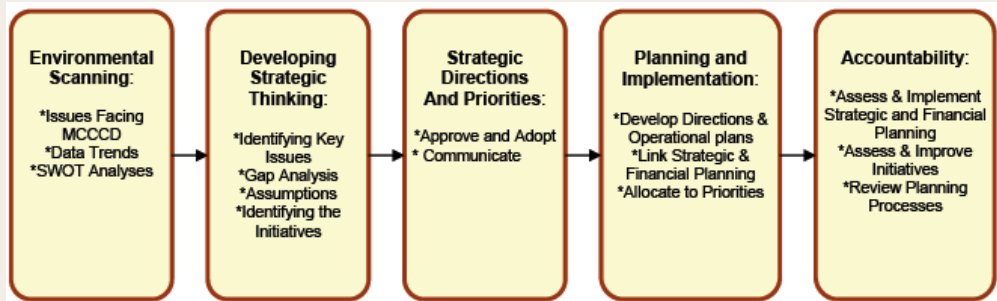
MCCCD uses two traditional types of planning: strategic and operational. The first, strategic planning, is a process that encompasses long-range goal setting and planning. Through District Strategic Planning, *strategic directions*, statements of emphasis from which individual colleges then derive their own strategic priorities and goals, are developed.

Maricopa County Community College District 2009 Adopted Strategic Directions

- Direction #1:** MCCCCD will maximize stakeholder access to the Maricopa college’s facilities, programs and services.
- Direction #2:** MCCCCD will promote and support opportunities for students by enhancing learning environments and delivery options; student retention and success strategies; and quality teaching and learning.
- Direction #3:** MCCCCD will enhance internal collaboration and increase external partnerships.
- Direction #4:** MCCCCD will identify and pursue new and existing revenue sources while promoting cost effectiveness.
- Direction #5:** MCCCCD will recruit, develop and retain a quality diverse workforce.
- Direction #6:** MCCCCD will maintain a strong identity that reflects its role in and value to the community.

The second, operational planning, is planning intended to develop detailed, short-term statements to implement the outcomes of strategic planning. This process often involves setting work standards and schedules necessary to implement the objectives. Whereas strategic planning looks at the organization as a whole, operational plans focus on action carried out by specific supervisors and department managers in the implementation of daily and weekly operations. In addition, the Maricopa Community Colleges engage in capital/master planning, long term capital planning based on master planning efforts that support strategic directions of MCCCCD colleges/units.

Chart 4.1 MCCCCD Strategic and Financial Planning Process



There are three levels in the decision-making hierarchy in Maricopa (District-wide, College/Units, and Departmental). Strategic planning occurs on all three levels, but development of operational plans tends to be focused at the college/unit and departmental levels. The three levels are shown in the following table and examples of specific responsibilities are identified:



Table 4.1: MCCCC Strategic Planning Levels

Strategy	Job Titles	General Responsibilities	Examples of Responsibilities
District-wide	Governing Board/Chief Exec./ Exec. Leadership/Advisory Councils (e.g., Chancellor, Chancellor's Exec. Council (CEC))	Financial performance and achievement of non-financial goals. They set objectives and formulate strategies	Recommendations on the district-wide budget, recommendations on district-wide strategic directions and priorities
Colleges/Units	Presidents or Vice Chancellors/Exec. Leadership/college Advisory Councils	Translate district-wide directions into concrete objectives	Operational plan development, development of budget requests, college/unit budget development
Departmental Chairs/Managers	Managers of functional areas	First and second line managers within a unit	Operational plan of development of budget requests, dept. budget development

These district processes make strong use of *MCCCC Environmental Scans 2004-2008*, and other district *strategic planning resources* that include MCCCC reports, federal and state agencies/organizations and professional associations to determine relevant Maricopa County and state level workforce and economic trends. MCCCC has also implemented an *EScan project*, a Wiki project used to collect environmental data within the district service area. The District Institutional Effectiveness Office provides numerous data and tools including the Decision Support System, Maricopa Trends, Factbooks, transfer to Arizona universities, and reports for the college to use in developing its own strategic plans <<http://www.maricopa.edu/business/ir/>>.

SMCC Strategic Planning Process

SMCC has diligently and effectively made progress in adjusting its college planning to align with district planning changes. Beginning in the 2006-2007 academic year, a complete revision of the college's strategic planning process occurred. This revision established the 2007-08 and 2008-09 academic years as years of moving toward complete alignment between the two levels (MCCCC and SMCC) of planning.

Chart 4.2: SMCC Strategic Planning Process



The SMCC's Strategic Planning Process is to be implemented fully in 2009-2010. At present, SMCC is in a transition phase. Below are descriptions of the roles of each segment of the college Strategic Planning process:

1. **College Executive Team:** Develops strategic college priorities.
2. **Strategic Planning Committee:** Develops and/or clarifies new or existing strategic college goals based upon the strategic college priorities coming from the Executive Team.
3. **Departments or Strategic Planning Teams:** Receives the strategic college goals and develops detailed departmental objectives and anticipated measurable outcomes.
4. **Strategic Planning Retreat:** Objectives are discussed, formed, and then integrated into the Strategic Plan.
5. **Strategic Planning Committee:** Develops processes for integrating these objectives into the College Strategic Plan. Integration includes coordination of objectives where departmental overlap is found.
6. **College Executive Team:** Receives plan and incorporates objectives into the Budget Calendar.
7. **Distribution:** College Strategic Plan distributed to campus.

The Executive Team develops College Priorities every three years, and revises them annually during the spring semester. These are also incorporated into the *Budget Development Process* for the next fiscal year.



SMCC Strategic Alignment with MCCC Strategic Planning

The table below illustrates SMCC's successful 2008-2009 strategic planning alignment with those of the Maricopa County Community College District:

Table 4.2

	MCCC Governing Board Goals					MCCC Strategic Directions					
	University Transfer/ General Education	Developmental Education	Workforce Development	Student Development Services	Continuing/Community Education	Maximize stakeholder access to colleges' facilities, programs & services	Promote and support enhanced learning environments, delivery options, student retention and success strategies, and quality teaching and learning	Enhance internal collaboration and increase external partnerships	Identify and pursue new and existing revenue sources while promoting cost effectiveness	Recruit, develop and retain a quality, diverse workforce	Maintain a strong identity that reflects its role in, and value to, the community
SMCC 2008-09 Strategic Planning Priorities											
1. Priority: Student, Community, and Staff Success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize student achievement in academic, personal, and career goals. Provide quality services in a timely manner to meet diverse community needs. Provide a nurturing work environment for professional staff development. 	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
2. Priority: Opportunities for Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand locations, delivery methods, class schedule, programs and services to meet the needs of our differing populations. 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
3. Priority: Student Persistence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize student access to, and utilization of, support services. Increase the number of students who successfully complete their courses. Increase the number of students who re-enroll in order to complete their educational goals. Increase opportunities for students to connect to the college beyond the classroom. 	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		

2009-2010 Strategic Planning Priorities and Goals

SMCC's Strategic Planning priorities have been established, and accompanying planning goals are due to be submitted to the Strategic Planning Committee Chairs by January 23, 2009. The 2009-2010 college planning priorities are:

Improve Student Access, Persistence, and Success

Parallel the focus of the college's enrollment management themes of access to educational opportunities, persistence towards educational goals, and success in reaching and completing those goals.

Further SMCC's Cultural Competence

Value, respect, and navigate multiple cultures (racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, sexual, political, religious, etc.) while retaining awareness and respect for oneself. Includes, but is broader than, diversity.

Optimize Resources

Maximize stewardship of human, fiscal, capital, political, and other resources.

These priorities will last for three years and will be reviewed each year during the strategic planning processes.

Strategic Enrollment Management Planning

SMCC has created and maintained a well-developed Enrollment Management Plan monitored by the Strategic Enrollment Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC). SEMAC implements, documents, monitors, and periodically revises the process of student enrollment and retention, using approaches that are flexible, educationally sound, evidence based, and that support a collaborative approach to establishing priorities and determining strategies. This process follows the college's Strategic Planning priority of improving student access, persistence and success.

At the annual Enrollment Management Retreat, this advisory group develops strategies, and brainstorms ideas which eventually become formal recommendations to the college executive team. Areas of focus include:

- data analysis
- curriculum, instruction and program mix
- retention and persistence
- advising and recruitment
- marketing and promotion
- technology
- facilities management
- annual enrollment management plan
- evaluation and revision



SMCC Enrollment Marketing Strategies

SMCC invested in a professional marketing study in early 2000 to improve the college's image. The college has implemented a comprehensive set of strategies in these three general areas:

- **Recruitment**

The college has invested considerable resources, both fiscal and human, in designing, printing, and distributing (via direct mailings) the college semester credit class schedules and Community Education schedules. Additionally, for the 2008-09 year, 200,000 copies of the college Semester Guide to Enrollment were direct mailed to service area communities. Thirty-second radio advertisements and print advertisements were created and placed. The college website also functions as a recruitment tool, and maintenance and acquisition of search optimization technology for the site are a significant piece of the college marketing strategy. (A searchable [SMCC College Catalog](#) is now available on the college website.) The college has increased SMCC awareness among the Spanish speaking market by advertising in local Spanish language print and broadcast media.

- **Retention**

SMCC is committed to retaining the students who enroll with us. The college has promoted the district-wide unified student enrollment website My.maricopa.edu; and has been innovative in communicating with students through the new Student Information System (SIS) and through Google "g-mail," as well as continuing to communicate with students through direct mailings. Several on-campus advertising components have been implemented: a Welcome Center TV, the main campus 24th Street marquee, and informational promotion of college student services ("Priority Registration" and "College Goal Sunday" campaigns).

- **Image and Community Awareness**

SMCC distributes and posts online a formal [Community Report](#) every three years and encourages business-corporate-college partnerships. As part of its facilities use plan, the college promotes community attendance at SMCC Performing Arts Center (PAC) events and encourages the community to use all of SMCC facilities for their own events as well. Participation at District events such as "[Maricopa Week](#)" creates positive community awareness of our college.

Technology Planning

SMCC's Technology Master Plan is a living document, crafted by college technology leadership to address the ever-growing demand for technology-supported instruction and administrative services. The technology plan is funded primarily by the 2004 General Obligation Bonds, and aims to support student access, persistence and success, while maximizing resources for the college. The "SMCC 12-year Technology Bond Planning Schedule" is the primary capital sub-plan, and it fleshes out this process in the *Technology Master Plan*.

Table 4.3: Planned Technology Expenditures

	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09	FY 2009-2010
Annual Replacement Plan	\$ 514,746	\$ 602,650	\$ 592,179
VOIP Pilot	\$ 20,000		
Guadalupe Center Expansion	\$ 436,500		
4 New Classroom Computers	\$ 4,500		
Laptop Student Recruiters	\$ 5,000		
TLC workstations	\$ 6,809		
Marketing Software & Hardware Upgrade		\$ 4,500	
Gym Audio System		\$ 50,134	
Wireless Network First Phase		\$ 125,000	
Video Software & Hardware		\$ 3,075	
Ahwatukee Center		\$ 60,546	
Cisco Academy Equipment		\$ 14,600	\$ 13,400
Data Center Expansion			\$ 130,000
Wireless Network Clean Access Services			\$ 50,000
Writing Center Computers			\$ 5,000
Classroom & Office VoIP (part of Safety Plan)			\$ 100,000
TOTAL:	\$ 987,555	\$ 860,505	\$ 890,579

The College Technology Committee (CTC) and the College Technology Services Department work hand-in-hand to plan and implement technologies that effectively accomplish the college mission. The Technology Master Plan is the blueprint for this ongoing process, and contains several sub-plans, including a staged plan for technology replacement. This replacement plan was recently up-dated, simplified, and renamed from the "2-4-6 Technology Upgrade Plan" to the "Technology Replacement Plan." The updated plan is designed to optimize SMCC technology funds and to guarantee:

- "High-end" classroom computers will be less than two years old.
- Every classroom computer will be less than four years old.
- Employee computers will be less than six years old.



Other technology trends outlined in the Technology Master Plan and other documents include a focus on “Learning Spaces Design” (as the College Technology Committee prepares for participation in bond-related construction specification); a college-wide wireless system; VoIP communication; new Teaching and Learning classroom technologies; continued support for the new Student Information System rollout; and building database and network infrastructure for future projects.

Facilities Master Plan

As the college began preparing for the 2004 Bond, a revised *Facilities Master Plan* was developed. The plan addressed the 24th Street and Baseline campus along with the Guadalupe Center. Most importantly, the plan developed by the architects included an assessment of our existing facilities. This plan has been extensively used throughout current renovations and new building projects.

MCCCD Capital Development Campaign (General Obligation Bonds)

In November 2004, 75% of the Maricopa County voters approved \$951,359,000 in new general obligation (GO) bonds. The bonds were to cover 10 years of planning and construction; the bonds would be paid back in 20 years. The original bond items and current program can be found at *District Facilities Planning and Development, Projects*. SMCC received more than \$59,000,000 for new or renovated classrooms, labs and equipment, a new integrated community library with the City of Phoenix, a Teaching and Learning Center, renovated multi-purpose and technology enriched classrooms, an expanded central facilities plant to support growth, an expanded Guadalupe Learning Center with classrooms and student service areas, and a permanent facility in Ahwatukee. Because of inflation, SMCC had planned, but was not able to keep, a new Science Building. In addition, the bonds via district allocations provided occupational education equipment, major maintenance, security, athletic facility repair, and IT system-wide services.

SMCC's Responses to Service Area Trends

South Mountain Community College faces several trends in its service area: tremendous service area population growth, increasing numbers in both the “under 24” and “over 50” age groups, and a sharply increasing socioeconomic diversity in our service communities. Complicating these trends is the United States’ economic downturn (and more specifically, the significant downturn in the Maricopa County housing market), new state immigration legislation, and 2008 and 2009 Arizona state budget shortfalls of \$1.8 and \$2 billion respectively *Resource Room: JLCB October 2008 Report*.

State and county societal and economic trends are researched and tracked regularly at the district level. District monitoring reports focus on 1) Diversity, 2) Assessment, and 3) Enrollment. All are referenced by the college planning committees as well. The college also uses 11 community advisory board memberships. Administrative representatives from SMCC attend meetings of each of these boards to keep apprised of current issues in our many communities. A complete list of SMCC advisory boards can be viewed in the [Virtual Resource Room](#).

Each of these community connections enables the college to more clearly determine the needs of its constituencies; the college is effectively planning and preparing for response to a variety of trends:

Addressing Service Area Growth

Ultimately, an increase in service area population translates into the college's need to serve that population as actual and potential students. SMCC has responded to that growth with strategic land purchases, new facilities, and much needed renovation and expansion of existing outdated facilities.

In 2007, land was purchased in both Ahwatukee (6 acres at \$2.78 million) and Laveen (43 acres at \$8.185 million). Currently, there is no permanent SMCC structure for either of these communities; additional bond funds will be needed. The purchase of the Ahwatukee and Laveen land, and ultimately construction of facilities, will provide a long-term college presence and stability in the communities.

Ahwatukee Foothills Center moved into improved rental property during the summer of 2008. The new facility, in a corporate office environment, provides 10 classrooms along with office and storage space and will allow SMCC to offer both day and evening programming.

Laveen has been served with classes located at grade schools, churches, and golf course club facilities. Starting fall 2008, the majority of Laveen courses were offered at Betty Fairfax High School, located one half mile due south of the future site. Other Laveen community sites may continue to be used as needed. This centralized location will provide more presence and consistency for the community to begin to know the college.

New Guadalupe Center Expansion

The Town of Guadalupe is a community in which three cultures flourish--members of the Pascua Yaqui tribe, those of Latin-American roots, and descendants of Western Europeans who arrived in this region more recently. All have combined to make the Guadalupe community a distinct demographic region in the Valley of the Sun.

SMCC has served the higher education needs of this diverse area since 1989. A permanent building was constructed in 2000. The MCCC 2004 bond initiative funds provided an opportunity for the



Guadalupe Center to gain a 5,000 square foot expansion and remodel of its existing space. A grand opening of the expanded center was held on May 31, 2008. This center serves both Guadalupe and western Tempe.

Community Library/Remodel of Current Library

To meet the need of the college and the South Phoenix community, plans for a new 45,000 sq. ft. integrated SMCC/City of Phoenix community library, built on the 24th St. property, are in place. Inter-governmental agreements have been signed; an architect and a construction management firm have been hired. In December of 2008, the college, city, and community will commence major design planning, with construction to begin spring 2009 for a summer 2011 grand opening. This project will provide much needed new space for library collections and technical services, children and teen centers, computer classrooms and open computer labs, study spaces, and new spaces for the Teaching and Learning Center. Significant new parking will be added to the north side of SMCC's campus and roadway modifications and improvements will provide access to existing and new facilities. The old library will be remodeled to include classrooms, faculty offices, the Learning Assistance Center, technology support, and the print shop.

Updated Central Plant

As a result of aging facilities, and to provide for future growth, SMCC will construct a new, higher capacity Central Plant to provide cooling for the campus and its future buildings. Construction began in October of 2008 and the plant will be operational by spring 2009. The project also includes new offices for facilities and a remodel of the Receiving Department.

Workforce Trends: Maricopa County Community College District Identified Trends

Active participation in both college and district level annual environmental scanning provides SMCC with a necessary basis for solid institutional planning. Participating in a formal scan of the environment in 2006, and reviewing the annual District environmental scan report, keeps South Mountain Community College abreast of local, county, state, and national trends in workforce and community college trends (*Environmental Scan*).

The most recent *MCCCD Environmental Scan* (June 2008) indicates the following trends emerging that will have the greatest impact on the District as a whole:

- An increasing demand for alternative course delivery and 24/7 access to services
- Declining Maricopa County property tax revenues and state budget shortfalls creating more college reliance on tuition
- Students entering college are less prepared than ever

- Students attending multiple institutions (sister colleges, private and public institutions) during their pursuit of higher education (called “swirling”)
- In an increasingly competitive educational market, coordination and collaboration between educational entities is becoming more and more important
- College becoming less affordable for students

SMCC Relevant Workforce Trends

- Careers in Management, Education, Human Resources, Construction Trades, Health care, Computer Systems Analysis, and Software Engineering have the highest percentage of projected growth in Arizona.
- Computer *programming* jobs NOT growing, but new trends in other IT career tracks are evident.

SMCC’s strong Bilingual Nursing, Behavioral Health, Information Technology, Early Childhood Education/Montessori, Teacher Education, Engineering, and Retail Management programs all meet the skill demands of five of the occupations with the most current openings in Maricopa County. Each of these programs has experienced strong college support in the areas of course and curriculum development and fiscal support in the way of new faculty to teach those courses, and faculty creativity and innovation has been encouraged.

Much of the workforce development partnerships created and maintained by the college have been initiated from within existing college programs or by individual faculty with a specific workforce interest. However, the spring 2008 hiring of an Associate Dean of Occupational Education and Workforce Development will revitalize these community connections.

Examples of some effective partnerships with a wide variety of entities, agencies, and organizations include:

- Banner Health Nursing Partnerships
- GateWay Community College Bilingual Nursing Partnership
- City of Phoenix
- Northern Arizona University (“North Meets South”, 2+2 Program)
- Cisco Systems, Inc.
- Achieving a College Education (ACE) and high school partnerships with seven feeder high schools
- Arizona Agribusiness and Equine Center (AAEC) Early College High School
- Ahwatukee and Laveen community site partnerships
- Recovery Innovations of Arizona (behavioral health)
- Arizona Diamondbacks language training partnership
- Arizona Foundation and Helios Foundation grant and scholarship partnerships
- Tempe Union and Phoenix Union High School districts UBET grant partners



SMCC's "2+2" partnership with Northern Arizona University (NAU) is strong evidence of forward thinking and its commitment to bringing bachelor degree opportunities to the South Phoenix area. Students can now achieve a 4-year degree in Education by attending NAU classes in a building owned by SMCC and leased to NAU right on the SMCC campus.

Programs, degrees, and certificates are continually updated and enhanced to effectively meet the needs of surrounding employers. The recent trends in the rapidly changing world of Information Technology are reflected in SMCC's evolving IT curriculum. In 2008, the IT department added the following programs:

- Information Technology: Cisco Networking Professional
- Information Technology: Computer Applications
- Information Technology: Network Security
- Information Technology: Network Server
- Information Technology: Programming/Systems Analysis
- Information Technology: Web and Graphic Design

Serving the Underprepared

SMCC students are exiting their high schools more and more under prepared for the college experience. This trend is clearly evident as students test into developmental English, Reading, and Mathematics courses at the rate of nearly 50%. Additionally, SMCC is seeing more under prepared adults as a result of the high drop-out rate in local schools, as well as the increasing immigrant population.

Although SMCC has always offered developmental level courses in English, Reading, and Mathematics, there has been little effort to coordinate the efforts of all three of these academic areas. In the spring 2008 semester, a formal developmental program timeline and a clear set of objectives were established. (*Developmental Education Objectives*) This plan details short and long-term goals and objectives and provided for the creation of a Developmental Education Program Director position. In fall 2008, the Language Arts Division Chair accepted this position in preparation for a more cohesive developmental education effort.

Arizona State Immigration Legislation

In November 2006, Arizona voters approved Proposition 300, restricting undocumented immigrants from being categorized as in-state or in-county residents for tuition purposes. They must pay out-of-state tuition to attend Arizona's community colleges and public universities. The financial aid prohibition includes tuition waivers, grants, scholarship assistance, or any other form of assistance subsidized by the state.

According to the MCCC 2007 Environmental Scan, “As of September, 2007, nearly 5,000 people in Arizona have been denied in-state college tuition, financial aid, and adult education classes as a result of Proposition 300.” Of those, 1,790 were community college students.

Voters also approved Proposition 103, a proposition emphasizing the importance of learning English and conducting state business in that language. Both of these propositions have increased the pressure on local immigrants. Because much of South Mountain Community College’s service population is directly or indirectly affected by these pressures, SMCC is working to provide additional services to our students for financial assistance (private scholarships) and is working to intensify the accessibility of our English as a Second Language Program.

A Focus on Diversity

The college has placed the mission of embracing “diversity” at the center of its planning and funding allocation efforts. By clearly stating the goals of “Increasing access, engagement, resources and success for diverse students and communities” and working “together in harmony” in its *2008-2009 Strategic Plan*, South Mountain Community College has set the foundation for managing both its current and its changing constituent diversity. As a minority-majority, Hispanic-serving institution, diversity is part of the SMCC fabric and daily experience. All college planning and department outcomes are clearly connected to the ideal of “diversity.” Diversity is reflected in hiring, in curriculum, and in student services. It is also present in the cultural services provided, including the Phoenix Symphony, and ethnic events such as the Juneteenth celebration.

Component 2a Summary

Increasingly, SMCC is becoming “evidence-based.” SMCC is a college that plans realistically for its future. It participates in regular environmental scanning of its service areas; gathers and uses regional and local workforce data to determine marketing, recruiting, and college planning strategies; works to stay connected to its communities by maintaining college representation on city planning committees; and responds to the changes in its surrounding communities in a timely and inclusive manner. According to the 2007 All-Employee Survey, college faculty and staff “agreed” or “agreed strongly” that:

- The college “responds to changing workforce needs” (70%)
- The college “solicits feedback from the community to develop its programs” (62%)
- SMCC provides an appropriate variety of occupational education courses (65%)
- SMCC provides “an appropriate variety of workforce development courses”(65%)



Though those surveyed indicated there was room for improvement concerning communication with external communities and the number and variety of personal interest courses offered, SMCC is, by all counts, a college ready to respond to the present and to be flexible enough to adapt to the changes in its future.

Core Component 2b:

South Mountain Community College's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

SMCC's resource base includes its fiscal resources, employees, and facilities. Budget development and expenditure processes begin with the district budget as all 10 individual colleges' funds are allocated and managed by the district office. MCCCDC is the legal entity that receives tax revenues, state aid, and grants from which allocations are determined. The District has a national reputation for excellent fiscal stewardship and received AAA bond rates from three firms for our general obligation bonds. See [Resource Room: Adopted Budget, 2008-9](#); [Virtual Resource Room: MCCCDC Adopted Budget](#)

Fiscal Resources

Fund Accounting Structure

MCCCDC uses the fund accounting financial structure to manage its resources and is guided by accounting principles as defined by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

Unrestricted General Fund (Fund 1)

Fund 1 is the main operating fund for the district. In fiscal year 2008-09 the district general fund amounted to \$42,104,257. This includes college and district office operational funds most of the salaries and benefits of most faculty and staff, supplies and materials, fixed charges, communications and utilities, travel and transfers.

Auxiliary Fund (Fund 2)

For the district, Fund 2 totals \$139,800,000. This fund includes college activities (student government, athletics, various activities), and other auxiliary programs that includes scholarship support, non-credit programs that are generally self-supporting, and course fees. For the 2009-10, the college activities dollars will be folded into the Fund 1 accounts to better comply with GASB principles.

Restricted Fund (Fund 3)

The fiscal year 2008-09 district Restricted Fund budget was \$161,900,000. These funds are restricted in use, and often come from grants (e.g., Title V, Title III, Carl Perkins), contracts, student financial aid, and Proposition 301 (a state sales tax that supports workforce development programs.)

Plant Fund (Fund 7)

The district's capital fund totaled \$525,600,000 for FY 2008-09. These funds are used for new construction, major remodeling, major maintenance, land purchases, and capital equipment. Since our last accreditation, we used 1994 and 2004 general obligation bonds for new and remodeled construction. The district also levied revenue bonds to support performing arts facilities around the district.

Memorandum of Understanding for Auditing of Budget

Annual auditing for the District is handled by The State of Arizona's office of the Auditor General. The auditors are not permitted to issue individual audit reports for the Maricopa County Community Colleges. In 1996, the North Central Association and MCCCDC created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to satisfy the need for an institutional external financial audit by a certified public accountant or a public agency at least every two years. The memorandum was updated to reflect that of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

The memorandum addresses criteria related to resources, uses and assurances. It provides records that demonstrate efficient management of individual expenditure budgets consistent with maintaining the fiscal viability of the district, and demonstrates the integrity of the college and the district. This memorandum can be found online and in the Appendix of this document. ([Memorandum of Understanding](#)).

Revenue Sources

MCCCDC receives the majority of operating funds from three primary sources: property taxes (58.68%), student tuition and fees (25.2%), and State of Arizona (9.91%). Other revenue sources include fund balance (4.94%) and miscellaneous transfers (1.26%)



Chart 4.3: MCCC General Fund I Sources of Selected Revenues

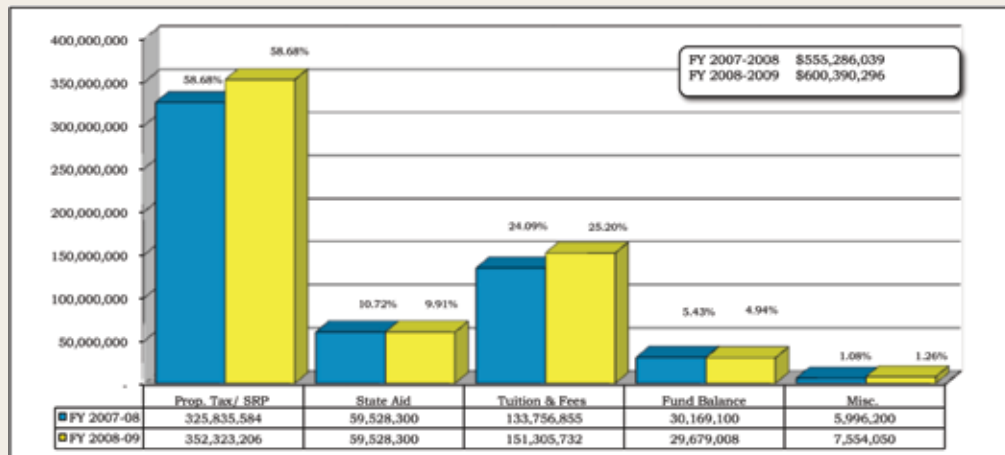


Chart 4.4: MCCC Expenditure by Function

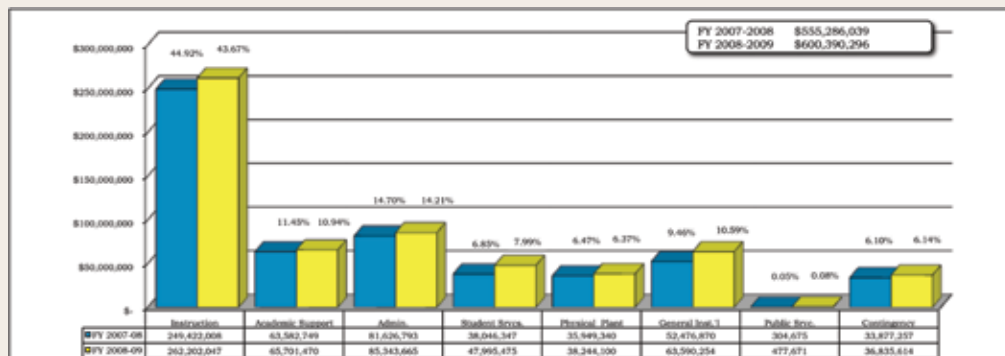
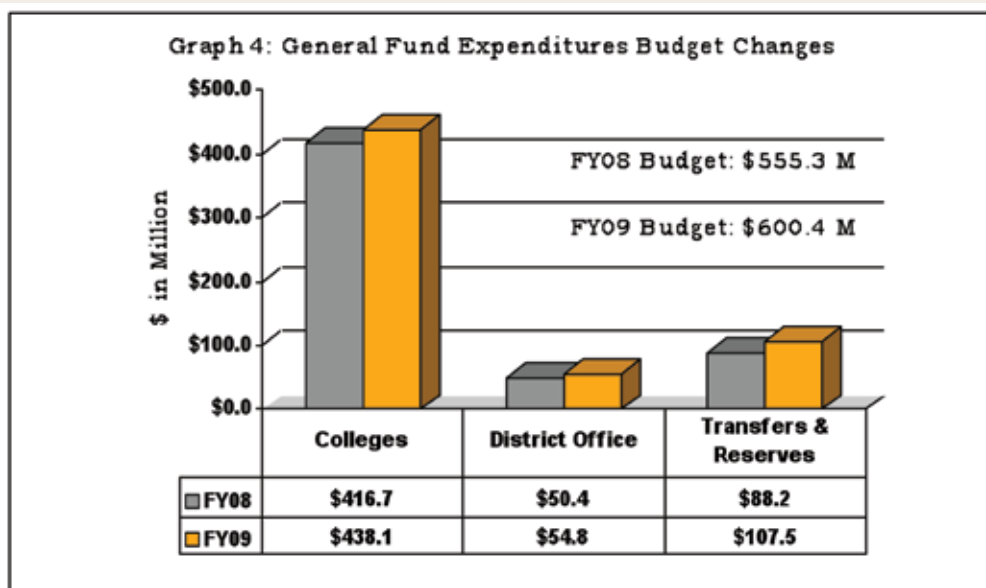


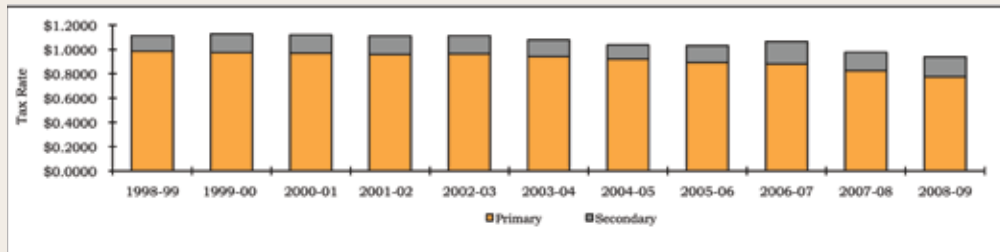
Chart 4.5: MCCC Expenditures by Units



Property Tax

Property taxes are the dominant district revenue source, providing 62% of total revenue, and tax payers have been consistently generous in supporting levy tax increases. In the current county budget climate, however, property values are declining, and tax revenues are projected to be lower for at least the next three years.

Chart 4.6: Historical Tax Rates



Tuition and Fees

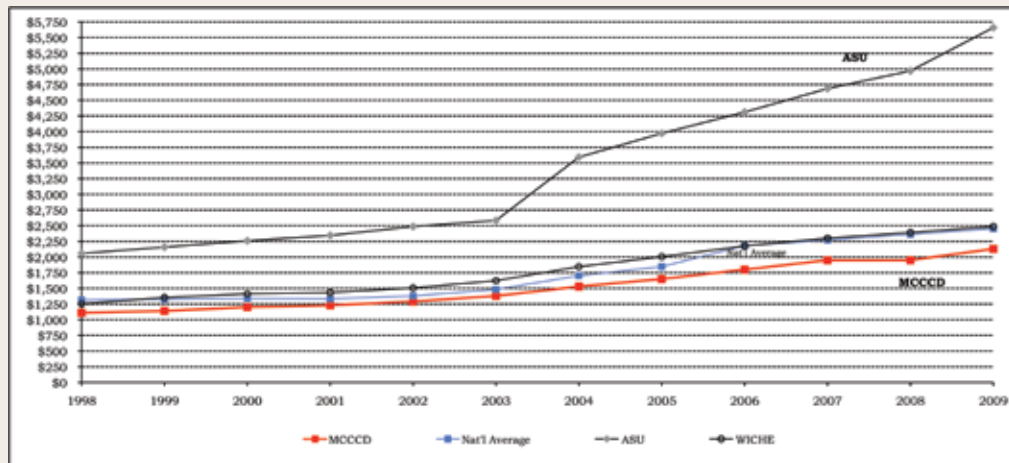
The MCCC Governing Board approved a tuition increase for resident and non-resident students effective July 1, 2008. The current rate is \$71/credit hour. This rate, \$2,130 for a full-time student, is lower than the national average (\$2,454) for two year colleges and significantly lower than the tuition rate at Arizona State University (\$5,659). Historically, MCCC has maintained a tuition rate lower than that of the national average.

Table 4.4 Historical Tuition and Fees

MCCC HISTORIC TUITION & FEES						
Fiscal Year	Per Credit Hour			Annual	Increase	
	Current Unrestricted Fund 1	Current Auxiliary Fund 2	Combined Total	Cost Per Full-time Student		
					Dollars	Percent
FY 1998-99	27.00	11.00	38.00	1,140.00	30.00	2.70%
FY 1999-00	28.00	12.00	40.00	1,200.00	60.00	5.26%
FY 2000-01	28.50	12.50	41.00	1,230.00	30.00	2.50%
FY 2001-02	30.50	12.50	46.00	1,380.00	90.00	6.98%
FY 2002-03	33.50	12.50	41.00	1,230.00	30.00	2.50%
FY 2003-04	38.50	12.50	51.00	1,530.00	150.00	10.87%
FY 2004-05	53.50	1.50	55.00	1,650.00	120.00	7.84%
FY 2005-06	58.50	1.50	60.00	1,800.00	150.00	9.09%
FY 2006-07	63.50	1.50	65.00	1,950.00	150.00	8.33%
FY 2007-08	63.50	1.50	65.00	1,950.00	-	0.00%
FY 2008-09	69.00	2.00	71.00	2,130.00	180.00	9.23%



Chart 4.7: Annual Tuition and Fee Comparison



* For FY08-09 Western Interstate Commission for Higher Educations (WICHE) and National Averages are projected based on the prior year's percentage. For FY08-09 ASU and MCCC Tuition Rates are approved.

State Appropriation

State aid is based on a statutory formula related to enrollment levels and includes operational support and capital support. Originally, the state and the county were to pay 50% each. The state was never able to honor that commitment. Soon, the formula changed to include tuition, and now, state aid represents 11% of the MCCC budget; tuition has increased accordingly. Recent trends indicate the percentage of state aid will continue to decrease.

District Budget Process

The district business office initiates the budget development process. This process is coordinated by the Vice Chancellor of Business Services and the district Financial Advisory Council (FAC) provides overall guidance to the process. FAC makes its recommendations to the Chancellor's Executive Council (CEC); CEC makes recommendations to the Chancellor before those recommendations go to the Governing Board.

The amount allocated to each college is based on historical funding levels and enrollment growth at the individual college. Some elements are given on the basis of formula. Generally speaking, the funds are distributed this way:

- **Fund 1:** Each has a permanent base budget; the amount the college had in the previous year. Added to the base are dollars for salary increases and benefits, new construction, remodeled construction, educational advancement, and for FTSE growth. Subtracted from the base are enrollment decreases.

- **Fund 2 auxiliary programs:** Student activities/athletics are funded by a portion of tuition. In FY 2009-10, these dollars will be included in Fund 1. The remaining dollars are an estimate of what will be produced by self-generating programs and course fees. These dollars are only spent if the income is produced.
- **Fund 3, Restricted Funds:** On a formula basis, MCCCDC distributes the federal Carl Perkins funding and local Proposition 301 funding designated for workforce development needs.
- **Fund 7:** The GO Bonds are distributed in part by formula and in part by what was approved in the bond initiative. During FY 2008-09, the legislature eliminated capital state aid; it may also be eliminated for subsequent years.

The Vice Chancellor of Business Affairs is the chief financial officer for the district. MCCCDC business services include accounting, auditing, purchasing, surplus and auxiliary services, accounts payable, payroll, grants administration and budgeting.

MCCCDC Carry-Forward Program

Each year, the colleges are allowed to carry-forward a maximum of 3% of their Fund 1 base to fund one-year-only requests for the subsequent year. Generally, the funds are used for OYO positions and pilot instructional and/or student service activities. In FY 2009-10, the colleges can carry 3.5% since the Fund 2, college activities and athletics, will move to Fund 1.

SMCC Budget and Process

The following table reflects the budget by fund for SMCC for the last three fiscal years:

Table 4.5: SMCC Budget by Fund

Adopted Annual Budget	FY 08-09	FY 07-08	FY 06-07
General Fund 1	\$21,008,935	\$19,979,910	\$19,261,746
Auxiliary Fund 2	\$ 3,062,212	\$ 2,974,609	\$ 2,930,151
Restricted Fund 3	\$ 4,707,946	\$ 6,227,995	\$ 6,598,732
Plant Fund 7	\$ 2,467,860	\$ 2,474,682	\$ 2,474,682
Total Budget	\$31,248,953	\$31,657,196	\$31,265,311

The SMCC Fund 1 budget has grown slightly, due mainly to salary increases that are added to the base budget. The FTSE growth has basically been static. The Fund 2 budget has grown slightly, again, basically because of salary increases. A grant ended and there was a slight decrease in the



amount of student financial aid that resulted in a decrease in Fund 3; and Fund 7 remained basically the same.

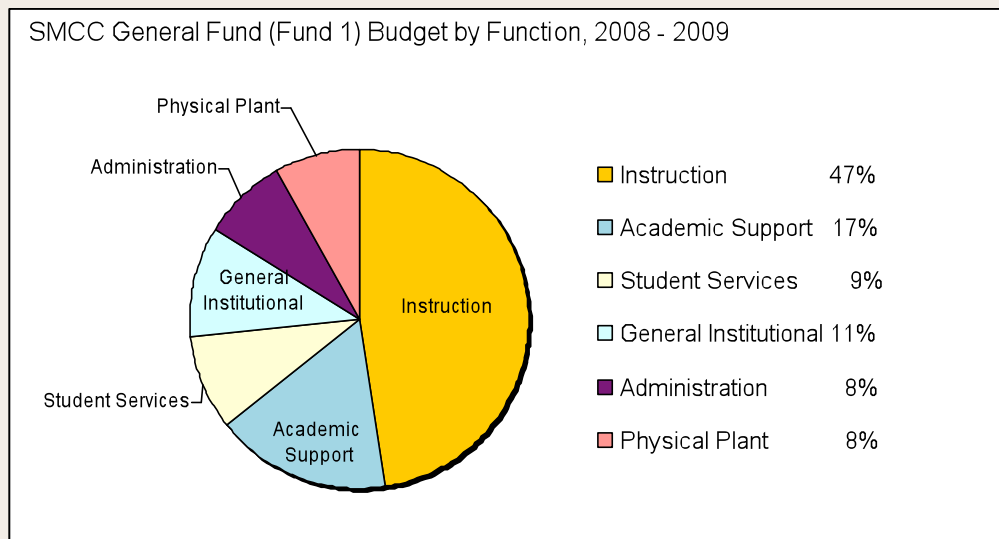
SMCC Budget Process

The SMCC budget process for the next fiscal year begins with written assumptions, strategic planning, and timelines issued in September. The deadline for submission of the requests (which are done via an automated database system) is the end of the month. Once submissions are final, each of the three vice president’s leadership teams rate requests within their area. The Executive Team reviews these rankings against fiscal realities, their relationship to college strategic planning goals, and the original planning assumptions, and prepares final budget recommendations for the following year. The recommendations are presented to the President’s Leadership Advisory Council (PLAC), and when endorsed, become the budget for the next fiscal year. These recommendations are placed on the web ([Budget Recommendations](#)).

SMCC Budget Allocation

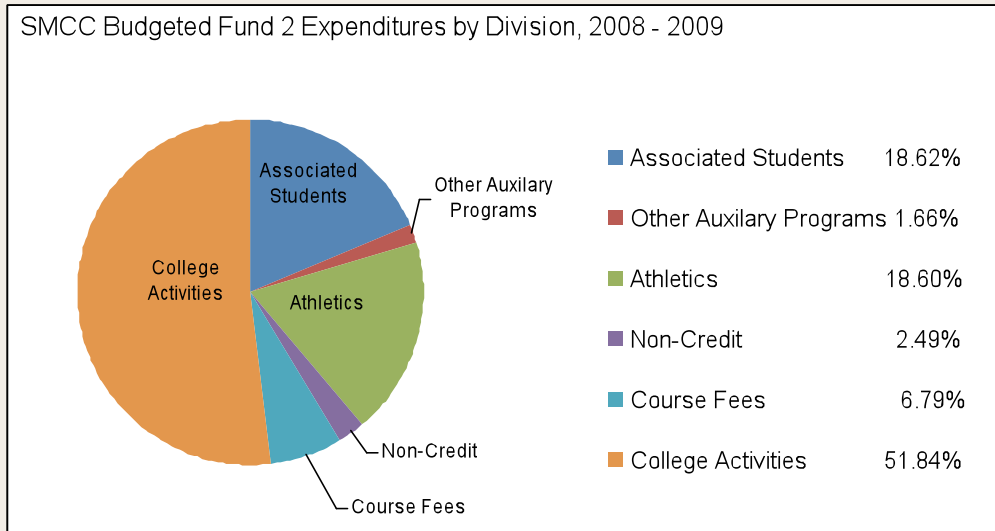
Most of the college budget is allocated to instruction, academic support, and student services.

Chart 4.8: SMCC General Fund Budget Allocation



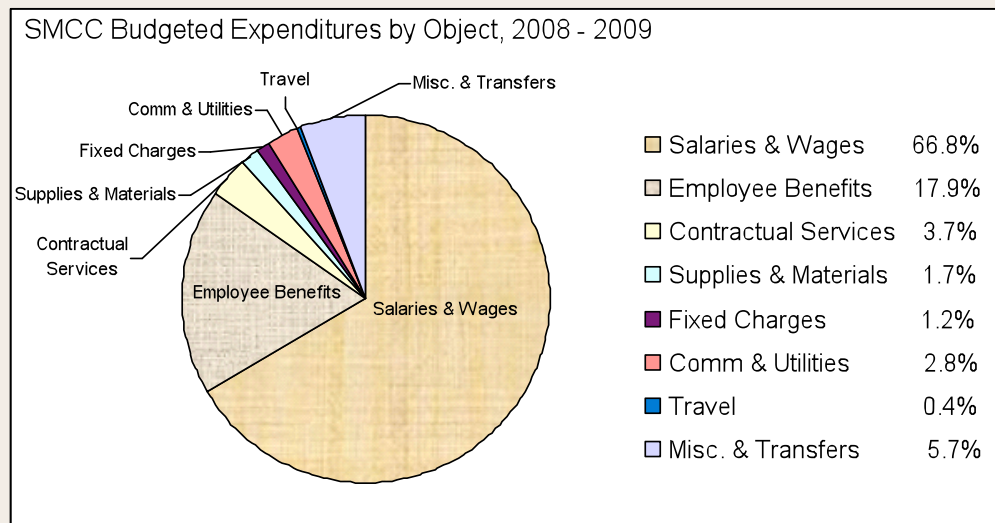
Fund 2, the auxiliary expenditures, include student activities, athletics, course fees, and noncredit activities. In FY 2009-10 in a change mandated by district, expenditures for college activities and athletics will be included in Fund 1.

Chart 4.9: SMCC Fund 2 Expenditures



Nearly 85% of SMCC's expenditures are allocated to employee salaries and wages.

Chart 4.10: SMCC Budgeted Expenditures by Object



College Financial System

Since the last visit, several new systems have been added, including the Financial Reporting System (FRS) and Oracle Government Financials (OGF), which became the College Financial System (CFS). Web Financials, a real-time service, allows managers to closely follow budget amounts. A district-wide automated Budget Development System (BDS) was also developed. SMCC College Business Services handles budgeting, purchasing, cashing, inventory control, bookstore and food service.



This department performs routine internal audits, provides services to the District's Audit Department, and works with the Arizona Auditor General's Office.

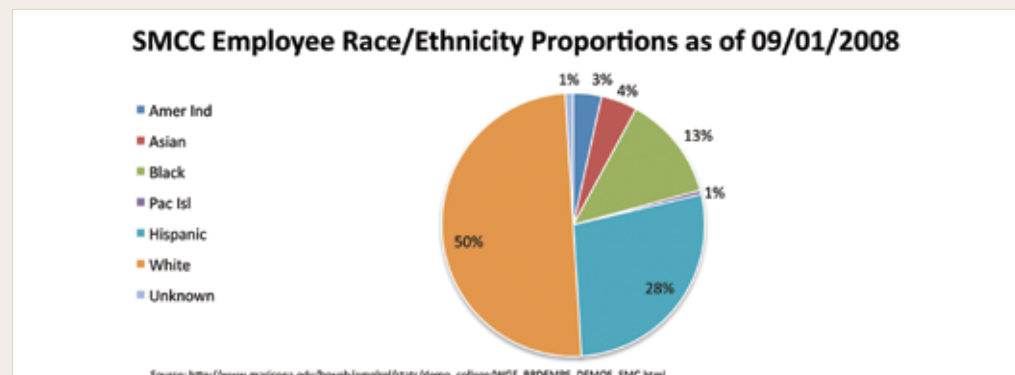
Human Resources

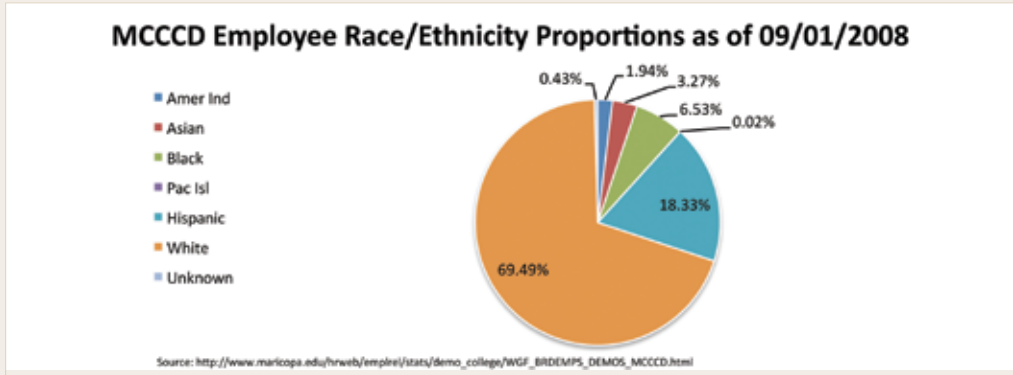
Over the ten-year period 1999-2009, the number of full-time employees at SMCC has increased from 153 to 214, nearly 40%. This increase is based on enrollment growth and several grants, as well as new programs and services, and is carefully planned to meet student needs and fit within college budgets realities. The management of this valuable college resource is coordinated by SMCC's Human Resources Department. To help manage and coordinate this valuable college resource, SMCC added a full-time resource staff member in 2005-2006. Additionally, the district has an extensive set of human resource policies and procedures with which SMCC compiles <http://www.maricopa.edu/hrweb/>. In 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 SMCC participated in a pilot faculty diversity hiring process coordinated through the district's diversity committee, in order to sensitize the screening committees to issues of diversity. Annually, the Faculty Staffing Committee reviews and recommends priorities for new and replacement positions. SMCC and MCCCDC hiring practices, policies, and processes are detailed in Chapter 5 (Criterion 3).

Employee Diversity

As mentioned previously in this report, SMCC's commitment to diversity is strong. This commitment is clearly reflected in the diversity of its employees. The college's employee diversity closely mirrors that of the college's student population. Also, compared to the employee diversity of the district as a whole, SMCC has a more diverse employee group. Within existing policies and procedures, the college focuses on maintaining an inclusive work force. Below are charts that compare the employee diversity of SMCC to that of MCCCDC:

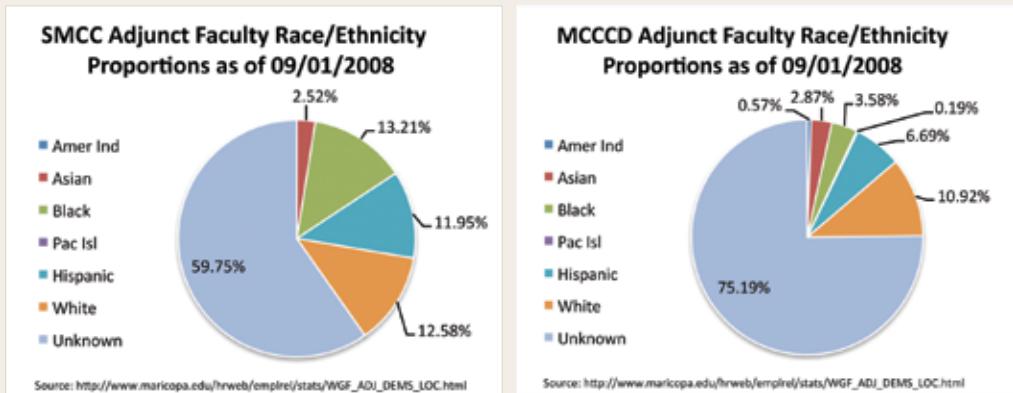
Chart 4.11:





Adjunct faculty also make up a large, and very valuable, portion of SMCC human resources. The charts below illustrate that SMCC adjunct faculty numbers are more significantly diverse than those held district-wide.

Chart 4.12:



Gender and employee class proportion charts can be viewed in the Appendix.

Active Retirement Program

Once an employee retires, s/he may qualify to participate in the district's Active Retirement Program, which allows eligible retirees to work up to 49% of a full-time workload in a position identified as being needed by the college through its planning and budget process. Because of current budget challenges, SMCC has reduced the amount of time a retiree may work to 30%. This program provides retirement incentive for employees, and gives the college additional help in areas of need. For more information see [SMCC Active Retirement Resources](#).



Facilities

The main campus at 24th Street has 210,619 square feet. Since the last visit, the college has added:

Technology	14,678	2000
Technology #2	5,250	2000
Performing Arts Ctr	32,640	2003-04
Life Science Annex	3,095	2007
NAU Building	3,025	2007
New Central Plant	2,382	2009
Remodel old Central Plant (in construction)	3,654	2009

SMCC's ongoing goal is to maximize use of college space while maintaining our facilities in good working condition, in order to be fiscally prudent and offer appropriate stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

In fall 2008, SMCC conducted a college schedule and classroom use scan with the *Clarus Group* consulting firm to surface, clarify, and resolve any inefficiencies in the areas of classroom use, use of human resources, and cost effectiveness of the current class schedule format. The firm analyzed three consecutive years (six semesters) of enrollment data for patterns of inefficiency, and visited the campus in September to communicate with college division, department, and program leaders about their scheduling and facility use concerns. *Clarus* will visit the college again in early spring 2009 and provide written recommendations at that time.

The planned South Mountain Community Library (in partnership with the City of Phoenix) will afford the college new space and a wonderful resource to the South Mountain Village when it opens in 2011. The library will contain additional classroom space, the TLC, children's, adults and teen collections, and community meeting rooms. In the old library, the college will house the Learning Resource Center as well as additional classrooms and office space (*Facilities Master Plan*). Until that time, the college will work to capitalize on the use of its current space in order to best serve its students.

Facilities Maintenance

Both routine and major maintenance are coordinated by the college Facilities Department. The Facilities Committee provides overall guidance to classroom and common areas.

While the college has developed a Facilities Master Plan, it has yet to create a routine and major maintenance plan for the college. Luckily, the district Facilities Planning and Development Department coordinates the funds and the cycle for roof maintenance, parking lot maintenance, and repair of the track. Within the 24th Street campus, we have yet to develop and subsequently fund the major

repair of men's and women's restrooms. The college Facilities Committee has addressed some of these issues, but more needs to be done. These items will most likely become part of the 2014 bond initiatives.

Component 2b Summary

South Mountain Community College's resource base adequately supports its educational programs and the specific plans the college has for its future. Although the college is undergoing budget cuts, both the college and the district have adequate resources and processes that will allow education at SMCC to continue. The college Strategic Plan and its planning processes enable the college to efficiently and effectively establish planning priorities, goals and objectives, and to follow through successfully in meeting those goals and objectives.

Core Component 2c:

SMCC's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

Though college planning processes are in place, the need to continuously evaluate and assess the college processes is equally important. The Institutional Research Office is instrumental in this assessment.

Institutional Research Office (IR)

Providing support for instruction and student service activities, the Institutional Research Office analyzes data, matches purposes to activities, tracks the college's strategic plan process and coordinates strategic planning processes with the district office. The IR office obtains information through a variety of sources including the SIS data warehouse, MCCC Trends, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), and others to help the college document and evaluate trends and results. Each of these resources can be located in the [Resource Room](#).

Program Review for Instruction

Through its improved program review process (detailed in Chapter Five), the college has an evaluation and review cycle for its academic programs and services. Results from this review cycle inform both planning and budgeting processes.

Additionally, individual college units may undertake supplemental reviews for the purpose of evalua-



tion and improvement. One such example is the Library Instructional Services Assessment. During the 2007-2008 academic year, the SMCC instruction librarian, with input from others, developed the framework for adding critical thinking components as a significant part of library information literacy instruction that is offered in partnership with faculty teaching courses such as English and Communication. Concurrently, library faculty and staff revised the *library mission statement*.

The mission statement framework includes assessment components, and aims to align information literacy instruction and classroom instruction with the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*.

The proposed multi-year plan incorporates a *Request for Library Instructional Services Form* which faculty fill out, either online or in person, before bringing students in for library instruction; also an *Information Literacy Research Strategy Alignment Tool*, which identifies the seven elements of the research strategy and is, ideally, collaboratively developed between the librarian and the instructor to facilitate the alignment with the ACRL competencies; and finally, a *Minute Paper Library Instruction Assessment Form* that students fill out before they leave the session.

Efforts during the next two academic years will be focused on presenting to faculty, for their input, the **Alignment Tool** and a proposed **Research Strategy and Assignment Organizer**; also increased training for those involved in delivery of this instruction as well as refining and continuing to develop the alignment, scoping and sequencing, and the evaluation process associated with this service.

The white paper describing the framework is available in the *Resource Room* and the *Virtual Resource Room*.

Program Review for Student Services

Student Services at SMCC has established vision and mission statements that are reviewed annually and revised periodically. Each department within student services also has a mission statement and program goals. In addition, all departments and student services as a unit establish program priorities each year. These annual planning priorities are shared with the college in a *Vision Mission and Priorities* report, which also includes staffing, information on services provided, and numbers of students served. Student services managers meet in retreat each year to review progress on college wide goals, student services goals and department priorities. Goals and priorities for the following year are established at that time. A yearend report is produced delineating the accomplishments of each department.

Three years ago, Student Affairs programs within the Maricopa Community Colleges began work on developing student learning outcomes. Managers and staff participated in college and district level training sessions, and district wide student services councils drafted outcomes to be assessed at the

colleges. Each student services department at SMCC drafted outcomes to include in their 2007-08 plans. In May 2008, these outcome statements were reviewed and revised. Departments currently are in the process of defining the data collection and analysis needed to assess outcomes.

While student services at SMCC has a long history of annually gathering information on numbers of students served and on establishing program priorities, managers can look forward to an opportunity in the future to evaluate what students learn as a result of their involvement with our departments. Examples of the above are available in the Student Services Year End Report and the Vision, Mission and Priorities document. Both are available in the [Virtual Resource Room](#).

College Safety Review Process

Like all institutions of higher education, SMCC is focused on maintaining an open, yet safe, environment. When the July 2008 shooting incident occurred, SMCC and the District had already been working on enhanced safety and security systems and procedures. That event simply accelerated the process. The District has since released the [College Emergency Operations Template](#) that provides standard language and process across the District. Additionally, the District continues to provide leadership and direction (as well as some funding) in standardizing safety processes.

In fall 2008, the Vice President for Administrative Services convened a college safety and security task force to review and make recommendations on SMCC's systems, policies and procedures. The task force represented various employee groups as well as interested stakeholders. Their recommendations, including an Emergency Management Plan per NIMS standards, were presented in November 2008 to the college executive staff and once approved will be fully implemented.

Employee Evaluations

Employee evaluations help the college strengthen the process of continuous improvement and enable the college to effectively meet the needs of its constituents. The evaluation processes for each of the employee group is outlined in the personnel policies and can be found at the [Human Resources](#) website under *Performance Management*.

Methods and processes concerning formal evaluation of all full-time residential faculty are detailed in the [Residential Faculty Policy Manual](#). This process is composed of three separate components:

1. Classroom visit by the VP of Academic Affairs, Division Chair, or designee for probationary full-time RFP faculty members
2. Student evaluation of their instructors
3. Faculty Evaluation Plan (FEP)



Independent Evaluations

Over the course of the year, many other assessments occur. These include the MCCCC Audits office; the State Auditors office; and occasional visits from OSHA or ADA. Recently, the college was investigated by the state’s non-smoking office. Federal agencies also visit to ensure that SMCC’s programs are operating in accordance with grant guidelines.

The college and district willingly call in outside experts and consulting groups to assist in evaluation and assessment of processes and results. For example, shortly after his arrival at SMCC, college president Dr. Ken Atwater engaged the CLARUS group to evaluate SMCC’s enrollment management and marketing efforts. The study resulted in improvements in both areas as well as some departmental reorganization. Recently the district has engaged an outside group to review all MCCCC financial aid processes for purposes of improvement.

Component 2c Summary

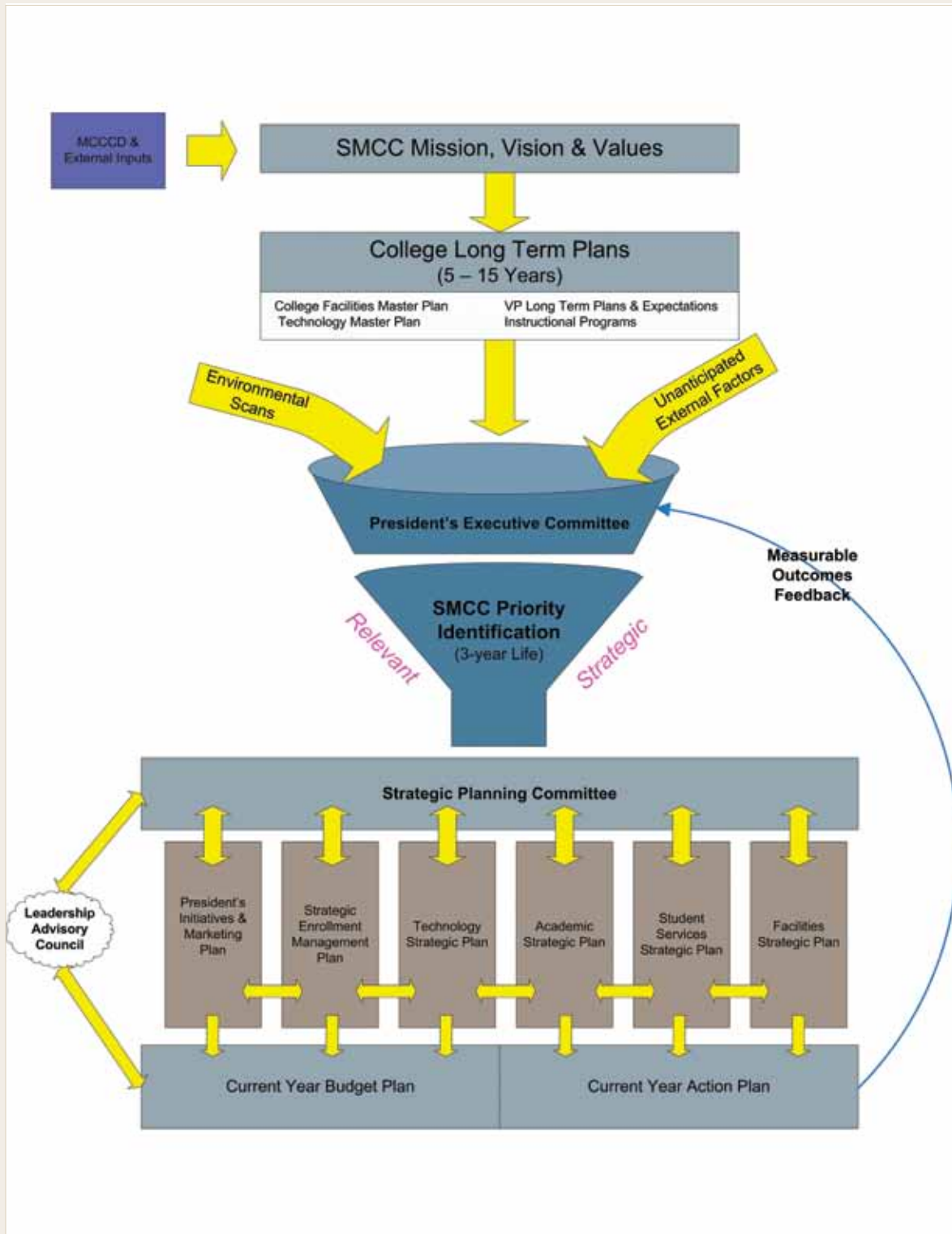
The college has in place ongoing evaluation and assessment processes. The college Strategic Planning Process, APRASL process, Student Services assessment process, and employee evaluations offer strong evidence that the college regularly strives for improving its offerings and services.

Core Component 2d:

All levels of planning align with SMCC’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

The college focus on the alignment of all of its planning processes with its mission statement has resulted in “top down” planning connections. Though the Strategic Planning Process has only recently been revamped, the positive effects can already be seen. The college staffing and budget processes are now clearly integrated into the college’s larger strategic planning process so that decisions are made in alignment with the college mission. As the diagram below illustrates, all levels of planning are directly attached to both planning processes at the District level, and to the college mission, vision, and values statements.

Chart 4.13:





All of the following are the result of the college planning processes and are directly connected to, and derived from, the SMCC mission statement:

General Education courses

- General education outcomes and assessment project

Transfer program (in coordination with District)

- New transfer articulation with Western New Mexico University
- Expansion of the ASU Alliance program
- Expansion of NAU programs

Occupational education and career development

- Montessori
- Bilingual Nursing Program
- New program development in Interpreter Training, CAD, and Community Health Worker

Continuing education

- Ahwatukee and Laveen offerings
- Workforce development partnerships

Student Success Initiatives

- Retention Task Force
- iStartSmart Pilot

Development Studies and ESL

- Study underway to improve both
- Math and English STAR Camp programs

Cultural, civic, and social events

- Arizona Ballet Under the Stars
- Phoenix Symphony
- Maya Angelou
- Water Safety Days

Academic support and student services

- Trio Programs
- Improved Advisement
- Student orientation (in person and on-line)
- ACE and ACE Jr.

Future Resource Planning

All current resource planning is aligned with college budget processes. This planning includes the funds SMCC receives from the district as well as the grant monies for which the college applies. However, in light of the recent state and county economic downturn, the college's need to develop independent financial resources has sharpened. SMCC has had several scholarship fund raising activities including STARS I, II and III. At present, SMCC has an active retiree developing a model for an institutional advancement office. SMCC is aware that developing methods for generating additional financial resources will enable it to continue fulfilling its mission in difficult economic times.

Criterion 2 Summary

South Mountain Community College has the plans and the processes to ensure that it will respond to future challenges. SMCC is doing much to keep abreast of current educational and socioeconomic trends in its service area and to realistically plan for the future service to its communities. Well-planned, community-sensitive college expansion, and improved workforce program development are examples of SMCC's efforts to align its goals and priorities with the district goals and with the directly assessed needs of its service area. The college Strategic Enrollment Management process has been recently refined for efficiency and effectiveness. Planning processes have been refined to enable the college to meet its future challenges and attain its long-range goals.

Successes

- Budgeting is closely linked to both the college planning process and its mission.
- Long-range planning allows for flexibility, and planning is evident in most college operations.
- The college is effectively addressing the very real need for facilities growth.
- All levels of SMCC planning are in support of the college mission statement.
- The College Technology Committee has done an excellent job of coordinating, planning, and implementing technology use and innovation within the organization.
- SMCC has made major progress in the areas of evaluation and assessment since the last HLC accreditation visit.
- The Human Resources office is effectively meeting current and future needs, and resources are well-managed.
- The college has completed multiple reorganizations to better meet its anticipated needs.



Challenges

- A “culture of evidence,” and one which plans and bases decisions on that evidence, is in its beginning stages. Often, there exists a gap between the amount of data collected about those elements that closely concern the college, and the analytical use of that data as information from which to move toward the future.
- While planning at the college level is much improved, department and division-level planning processes are still being refined.
- The MCCC employee evaluation process (per employee group policy) is not a proactive planning tool and does not link college goals to individual and department goals.
- Student enrollment and recruitment is a concern and will continue to be a challenge given the increased competition from private colleges and universities, and distance learning providers.
- Financial resource development, i.e., institutional advancement, is only in its beginning stages.



SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Chapter 5

Criterion 3

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Criterion 3:

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

This criterion asks institutions to demonstrate that they are fulfilling their stated missions. It asks institutions to prove that student learning is, in fact, taking place; that learning is happening because of effective teaching; and that both learning and teaching are aligned with the broader mission of the organization.

South Mountain Community College's mission declares, first, that it will provide "quality higher education for our diverse community." This portion of the Self-Study Report sets forth evidence that the college's educational practices, programs, and services are all aligned with its mission of "quality." This chapter provides evidence that quality "student learning and highly effective teaching" are primary college values and that they are taking place on a consistent basis.

It also addresses the quality of the college's learning and teaching *environments*, and whether or not they "foster student devel-



opment.” Finally, this chapter addresses whether or not SMCC is creating productive, more globally aware, and more technologically capable citizens for society.

Core Component 3a:

South Mountain Community College’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

SMCC’s curriculum is a shared, district-wide curriculum coordinated through the *District Curriculum Council* and *disciplinary instructional councils*. As part of the district-wide approval process, each course and program has stated course competencies, rather than “student learning outcomes.” The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the district office has been leading a multi-year initiative to encourage the district curriculum council and discipline level instructional councils to change MCCC language to one of “learning outcomes.” A list of all of SMCC’s approved courses and programs can be found at the District’s *Center for Curriculum and Transfer Articulation (CCTA)* website.

Despite the lack of formally written student learning outcomes, the college has focused on the assessment of student learning specifically through its revised Program Review process, and course level assessment process, as well as taking some beginning steps in across-college assessment in areas such as critical thinking and critical reading.

Revision of SMCC Program Review and Academic Assessment Process

In fall of 2006, the existing Institutional Effectiveness/Academic Assessment (IE/AA) and Academic Program Review committees were combined to form one umbrella assessment committee, now known as the Academic Program Review and Assessment of Student Learning (APRASL) committee. The purpose of the APRASL (pronounced “appraisal”) committee is to assess the opportunities, challenges and learning outcomes of SMCC’s educational programs using multiple measures to gain a holistic perspective.

In the past year, the APRASL committee redefined and regrouped our programs for evaluation purposes. The committee defined programs to include transfer programs, occupational programs, developmental programs, and different learning sites and support programs. The existing Program Review process was suspended and the process redefined, with a new report format template developed.

During AY 2007-08, South Mountain implemented its renewed Program Review process, focusing on five areas: 1) CISCO occupational program; 2) Early Childhood Development; 3) Teaching and Learning Center (TLC); 4) Guadalupe Center; and 5) Developmental programs

While continuing existing assessment practices, including the use of both formative and summative

evaluations, the APRASL team will be evaluating the existing processes for assessing teaching and learning. The team will be researching best practices at other institutions, examining how to best measure exit outcomes of SMCC graduates, and participating in national assessment conferences and the HLC Assessment Institute.

The Development of SMCC's General Educational Learning Outcomes

Since 2001, all faculty, both residential and adjunct, have been asked to participate in the college Academic Assessment process. This process includes a fifth-week all-course student survey and formative report, and, at the end of the semester, an evaluative summative report detailing specific changes that will be made to both content and methodology for the purpose of increasing student learning, success, and retention. This process, if followed, is a highly effective method by which to gather student learning data, and to use that data directly to impact instructional quality, and thereby impact student learning and success.

However, until now, these assessment efforts were being made without the guidance of a set of formally established general education outcomes; so, though the primary data was being used to directly impact student learning, there were no effective, institution-wide student learning outcome measures.

Developing a set of General Education Outcomes for South Mountain Community College became the APRASL Committee's primary focus in fall 2007. The committee formally proposed that the faculty adopt a set of defined general education outcomes specific for the students of South Mountain Community College. The committee defined these outcomes as needing to be, "very broad, with components taught not just in the so-called general education core classes but reinforced across the entire curriculum."

The committee also proposed that once outcomes were established, faculty would be asked to examine how they could implement one or more of the general education outcomes in their classes, thereby helping students to master the skills and knowledge we say every graduate of South Mountain should possess to be successful in their careers, their continued education, their families, and their daily responsibilities as a citizen of the global community.

The faculty, with the facilitation of the APRASL committee, would then devise methodologies for assessing whether or not our students were successful in reaching these general education outcomes. It was established that the results of these assessments would be used in a continuous effort to strengthen our general education efforts.

SMCC's General Education Outcomes are intended to align with external governing bodies as well as connect to SMCC's internal vision, mission, and values. The committee consulted the General Education Statement of the Maricopa District, the MCCCDD Governing Board outcomes for University Transfer



Education and General Education, Arizona and United States Department of Labor workforce development guidelines, NCA’s Higher Learning Commission’s statement on General Education Outcomes, and our own college Vision/Mission/Values statements. The proposed General Education Outcomes for South Mountain Community College align, meet, or exceed the expectations of all of these groups.

Each of these resources can be found at the following links:

- MCCC General Education Statement:
<http://www.maricopa.edu/academic/ccta/curric/ac/gradreq03.html> >
- MCCC Governing Board Outcomes:
<http://www.maricopa.edu/gvpolicy/boardpolicies/print/outcomes.pdf>>
- The Arizona Department of Education’s Arizona Career and Educational Guide:
<http://www.azed.gov/cte/Counselors/CareerEdGuide.pdf>>
- The U.S. Dept. of Labor Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)
http://wdr.doleta.gov/opr/FULLTEXT/1999_35.pdf>

In spring 2008, the APRASL committee released its recommended General Education Outcomes to SMCC faculty for input and review. They were as follows:

OUTCOME CATEGORY	STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. Critical Thinking	Ask questions that clarify the position of an author or presenter.
	Evaluate the quality, usefulness and soundness of the arguments and position of an author or presenter as to whether their arguments provide strong support for their conclusion or not.
	Identify whether an author is appealing to emotion or analytical reasoning.
	Judge the reasonableness of presented results.
2. Analytical Thinking	Utilize appropriate formulas in solving quantitative problems.
	Interpret data provided in charts, graphs or tables using quantitative and mathematical computations.
	Demonstrate an understanding of the scientific method.
	Solve numerical and/or logical word problems.
3. Information Literacy	Distinguish between good and bad sources of information.
	Use an Internet browser and online search engine to find specific information.
	Communicate with others using popular computer-mediated technology.
	Use a word processor to create and edit a document.
	Use a spreadsheet to perform basic mathematical calculations.
	Use an online database to retrieve a journal article.
	Locate a specified resource in the library.

4. Communication (Written & Oral)	Develop a thesis paragraph.
	Arrange ideas coherently using paragraph structure.
	Demonstrate competency in syntax, tense, voice, and punctuation.
	Properly acknowledges sources of information (footnotes, bibliography, inline).
	Create and deliver an oral presentation.
	Generate visual support materials for an oral presentation.
	Demonstrate an ability to work with others as part of a project team.
5. Personal Development	Identify ethical courses of action.
	Identify opportunities to participate in activities that foster a greater global awareness and cultural diversity and empathy.
	Set personal, educational and career goals and monitor their progress toward reaching those goals.
	Articulate the social responsibility of an individual within the larger community.
	Practice awareness of, and respect for, cultural diversity of peoples in this country and in the world.

The table below provides a suggested schedule of implementation with an aim to involving faculty and providing assessment data in the 2008-09 Academic Year. The committee is on target in its implementation.

TASK	TARGET DATE
Adoption of the general education outcome categories	May 2008
Each outcome is further defined and outcome measurements decided	November 2008
Publication of general education outcomes on website and implemented in college catalog, college publications, etc. going forward	January 2009
"Day of Learning" mini-conference focused on our general education outcomes	January 2009
Develop assessment strategy for each outcome	March 2009
Deploy pilot assessment to 2009 graduate applicants	May 2009

Course Level Student Learning Assessment

Campus-wide Formative Evaluations

The fifth week of fall and spring semester is "Academic Assessment Week" at SMCC. Residential and adjunct faculty conduct formative evaluations in their classes in the form of a written or online survey given to their students. The students comment on their satisfaction with the course, how they think they are performing, and what is helping and/or hindering their success in the course. They have an opportunity to make suggestions or changes to the course that would assist their learning.



The faculty member then uses the assessment/response survey to make mid-semester course improvements. These improvements may include providing more examples and activities for student practice, or adding review sessions or study skill focus sessions.

Summative Evaluation Reports

At the end of each semester, both residential and adjunct faculty provide a brief summative evaluation report of their classes, looking at both direct and indirect measures of student learning and including both quantitative and qualitative assessments. The methodologies vary by faculty member, department, and course, and include pretest and posttest, portfolio, peer evaluations, exit surveys, assessment of critical inquiry skills, and performance critiques. In addition to demonstrating student learning, the faculty reports include the information they gained from the original evaluation and, as a result, their recommendation on how to improve the course for the next semester.

Common Final Exam for Beginning & Intermediate Algebra Students

Faculty in the Mathematics Department have had several conversations on the usefulness of having a common final exam. One practical reason to implement the exam was to ensure that all members of the math department, full-time and adjunct, were accountable to the students and department to teach MCCC required competencies.

During the summer 2007, full-time math faculty met on two separate dates to develop a pilot of the Common Final Exam (CFE). It was decided that in order to maintain a level of academic freedom for the faculty, the final exam would be composed of two parts. These included the first part, the CFE, and a required second part, to be developed by the faculty at their discretion.

The mathematics department began implementing a CFE in the fall 2007 semester. The endeavor began as a pilot for full-time faculty, and it ultimately gave math faculty an opportunity to do an item analysis of the final exam test questions. The opportunity to analyze the results and ensure the test items are appropriately written, as well as assess the competencies, was critical in order for a reliable common final exam to be finalized. In summer 2008, the test was adjusted accordingly.

Program Level Student Learning Assessment

The SMCC APRASL process combines two important functions. Firstly, it provides the framework for ongoing assessment of student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level. This assessment is accomplished through formative and summative assessments of courses, a look at program outcomes during the program review process, and the emerging general education outcomes project.

Secondly, the recently revised program review process (now in its second year) provides a structure for individual programs to present qualitative and quantitative data regarding the programs history, current status, and future plans. The APRASL committee identifies programs for review during the spring semester. During the summer and early fall the program and an APRASL committee member work with the college institutional research department to gather and format data and reports using a standard template. The program writes its self study during the fall semester for review by the APRASL committee in early spring. Once the committee has reviewed and commented, the report is presented to the vice president of academic affairs and the college president for review and comment.

Across-College Level Student Learning Assessment

Institutional Critical Thinking Assessment and Critical Reading Evaluation

Currently SMCC assesses both the critical thinking and critical reading skills of a small sampling of students in order to gather broader data concerning student learning. This annual sampling is a beginning step toward assessing college-wide outcomes, and the formation of SMCC's General Education Outcomes will certainly improve the focus of these assessment efforts.

As the college further clarifies its General Education Outcomes, it plans to develop and deliver better assessments beginning in spring 2009. In addition, there is a need to then use the results to improve student learning, closing the assessment "loop."

Student Focus Sessions

In Spring semesters, the APRASL committee sponsored focus group sessions of daytime students, evening students, and students at the Guadalupe Center and Ahwatukee Center. In these video-taped sessions, students were asked to discuss their satisfaction with various campus services, their sense of support and enablement to succeed academically, and how their experiences at South Mountain helped them in working effectively with others, and developed their critical thinking, reading and study skills.

Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)

In comparing SMCC to comparable colleges, the responses on the CCSSE survey revealed SMCC students have greater opportunities to work with other students on projects during class and participate more in college-sponsored activities, but felt less encouraged to spend significant amounts of studying. Surprisingly, they valued career counseling less than their peers at the cohort colleges. The response frequency report reveals that SMCC students tend to work "harder than [they] thought [they] could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations" (18%-very often; 31%-often; 34%-sometimes; and 17%-never). 89% of our students reported working with classmates outside of class to



prepare class assignments. 85% of our students said they “worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources.” While this number is good, there is obviously a challenge to get the other 15% engaged in this manner. Only 15% of the student body reported that they have attended a college orientation program or course. Increasing this number would likely translate into a higher success rate and greater retention. 45% of the students work 30 or more hours per week for pay and 39% reported significant time spent weekly caring for dependents living with them. Thus, one of the challenges facing our students is a division of focus between work, family and school. Encouragingly, 72% reported that the college either “quite a bit” or “very much” emphasized providing the support they need to succeed at SMCC, while 5% reported “very little” support provided.

Component 3a Summary

SMCC has made a good start in assessing student learning outcomes at the course level. It has more work to do in integrating all instructors of all sections within a discipline. Some departments, like Mathematics, have done a more effective job of looking across course sections, and of using the results to improve learning and teaching. Programmatically, SMCC’s few occupational programs have done a good job of assessing learning outcomes and student competencies for the purpose of improving curriculum and pedagogy. The transfer program and the developmental program are initiating deeper work on assessment. The newly initiated General Education Outcomes project will drive serious discussions on learning outcomes and learning among the faculty. SMCC has recently been accepted to the HLC Assessment Institute and will continue its focus on effective, meaningful assessment for the purpose of improving learning. The college is committed to “closing the assessment loop” by using the evidence gained from all levels of assessment as the basis for course, program, and college level planning and decision making.

Core Component 3b:

South Mountain Community College values and supports effective teaching.

Truly effective teaching, teaching that is aware of accessing and assessing the whole student, and teaching that is committed to excellence in content mastery, is central to the institutional philosophy at South Mountain Community College. The fact that the college “hires the best” faculty, individuals who align with the definition above, is evidence that the organization “values and supports” effective teaching.

South Mountain Community College, as supported by MCCCDC, hires highly qualified faculty

SMCC Hiring Process

Hiring the Best is a District-provided workshop described as a session “focuse[d] on best practices for hiring faculty and staff at MCCCDC.” The purpose of the workshop is to ensure that screening committee chairs, and their screening committee members, conduct all aspects of the hiring process with strong ethical integrity.

The six-hour workshop covers the following topics:

- Roles and responsibilities of screening committee chairperson and members for conducting inclusive, equitable, and defensible processes.
- Hiring cycle procedures, techniques, and forms.
- Hiring cycle phases presented for selecting the best candidate: preparation, screening, interviewing, and reference checking.

Workshop attendance is mandatory for any screening committee chair that convenes a committee to hire a new faculty member. During this workshop, committee chairs also learn how to create and use candidate qualification rubrics. One of the faculty screening committee chairs’ responsibilities is to teach the other committee members how to evaluate candidates, and ask follow-up questions.

The minimum hiring qualifications for both residential faculty and adjunct positions are set by MCCCDC. The academic teaching fields require at least one of the following from an accredited college or university:

- Master’s degree in the teaching field
- Master’s degree in any teaching field with 24 upper division and/or graduate semester hours in the teaching field
- Master’s degree in any teaching field with 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching field

The occupational teaching fields require any one of the following from an accredited college or university:

- The same qualifications as those listed for academic teaching fields
- Bachelor’s degree plus three years work experience in field to be taught
- Associate’s degree or 64 semester hours and 5 years work experience in the field to be taught

All faculty must complete the course EDU250—Overview of the Community Colleges—or an equivalent course within two years of their date of hire. Many disciplines have also developed special



qualifications through their instructional councils. These qualifications can be seen at the [MCCCD Human Resources](#) website.

SMCC and MCCCD require that applicants submit an application packet including prior teaching experience, transcripts or a course completion form, and a cover letter indicating the extent to which the applicant meets the requirements of the job description.

After a posted faculty position has closed to applicants, a committee of SMCC employees chooses a subset of applicants to be interviewed. This hiring committee consists of faculty from the division with the job opening, faculty from other divisions, and representation from other college employee groups. The committee screens the applications according to the requirements of the official job description.

The screened applicants are then asked to a first interview, and to conduct a “micro-teach”, a 20-30 minute demonstration of their teaching skills. Based on the scoring rubric results, the top candidates are asked to interview with the vice president of academic affairs and/or college president. The college president has responsibility for making final selections and making recommendations to the Maricopa Community Colleges chancellor and governing board.

Adjunct Faculty Hiring

Academic divisions are also responsible for hiring adjunct faculty to supplement the core of full-time, residential faculty. Adjunct faculty are selected by division chairs, program coordinators, and/or course coordinators, who generally follow the process below:

- Request that interested applicants submit a cover letter, transcripts, and references
- Review the applicant’s paperwork and check references
- Conduct an interview with the applicant
- Explain teaching responsibilities, college philosophies regarding active learning, student centered learning, and the use of technology to support instruction.

Competitive Salaries

In order to attract and maintain quality faculty, the Maricopa County Community College District offers highly competitive salaries and benefit packages, and rewards professional growth and teaching experience through financial incentives. The faculty salary schedule is designed to encourage individual professional development and the attainment of advanced degrees. The district website displays a [table of salaries](#) as determined by years of experience and education. The salary schedule also appears at the end of the [Residential Faculty Policies](#) Manual (RFP). Adjunct faculty receive \$804 per load hour of instruction.

SMCC Develops Teaching Excellence

Faculty Evaluation Process (FEP)

The Maricopa County Community College District Faculty Association *Residential Faculty Policy* manual (RFP) provides the guidelines for both the residential and probationary faculty evaluation processes. The objectives of the evaluation program are two-fold: 1) to improve teaching performance, and 2) to advise the faculty members regularly and specifically of their strengths and weaknesses, progress, and overall status. SMCC faculty are in compliance with the district process and use it as an opportunity to grow and improve their teaching effectiveness.

Areas for Evaluation

To complete an FEP, the faculty member must engage in a self-examination of the three Required Areas and at least two of the Elective Areas. Examples of the following areas can be found in the Faculty Evaluation Plan guidelines. The required areas are:

- Teaching, Learning, and/or Service
- Course Assessment and/or Program Development/Revision.
- Governance and/or Committee Participation at the college and/or District levels

The *elective* areas are:

- Professional Development
- Acquisition of New Skills
- Enhancement of Diversity
- College Level Assessment of Learning Outcomes
- Service to the Community

Related Areas

In addition to an assessment of these “Three Required Areas and Two Elective Areas,” other “Related Areas” may also be selected by the faculty member to review in order to bring into better focus their full professional involvement at the college or within the District.

The faculty member to be assessed is the primary director of, and active participant in, the designing and implementation of their own Faculty Evaluation Plan. He/she carries the major responsibility for gathering the information about and completing the plan to the best of the person’s ability.

All faculty in the classroom are evaluated. Probationary faculty, those with the district five years or less, are evaluated during each semester of the first year and anytime during the academic year for the second through fifth years of employment in order to discuss the faculty member’s progress in the



areas of committee/division/college/district assignments, faculty development, and adherence to the college processes and procedures. More details about this probationary process can be found in the *Residential Faculty Policy Manual*.

According to the *2008-2009 Adjunct Faculty Policy Manual*, adjunct faculty are to be evaluated at least once during each of the first three (3) semesters employed, excluding the summer, by the appropriate staff assigned at the college/center. A course that meets three weeks or less does not require an adjunct faculty evaluation. A copy of each adjunct faculty evaluation is placed in his/her personnel file maintained at each college/center.

New Employee Orientation and Mentoring

Historically, because of its small size and very low turnover, SMCC hired only one or two new faculty each year. However, beginning in 2004, due to retirements and district staffing allocations, SMCC hired more new faculty and one-year only (OYO) faculty. This change caused SMCC to see the need for, and to create, a New Faculty Orientation. In 2005, the outgoing Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Ken Roberts, was just starting his retirement and he took charge of this year-long orientation program. In 2006, this program became more inclusive and welcomed all new employees. The program covers content such as district and college structure, planning, employee roles, budget, off-site campuses, the Faculty Evaluation Program and other topics. Additionally, faculty members are mentored informally by their campus and district peers. Discussions are taking place that will move New Employee Orientation under the auspices of the Teaching and Learning Center, which will allow SMCC to institutionalize the program and add other elements, including faculty mentoring. (Attendance and agendas are located in the *Resource Room*.)

Adjunct Orientation and Workshops

Prior to 2005, each semester SMCC held an orientation session for adjunct faculty once a year on a Saturday. These sessions were about the bureaucratic business of working in higher education and how to get access to resources to improve one's teaching. Also, these sessions highlighted the services available to students that adjunct faculty could refer students to if students need help mastering coursework (i.e., student tutoring).

When the new Vice President for Academic Affairs joined the college in 2005, the orientation schedule was changed to once-a-semester and she added two activities: 1) the meeting is now held in the evening over the dinner hour and beyond, with dinner provided; and 2) there is always an hour long professional development segment for which faculty are paid to attend. Previously, attendance at these events numbered in the 20s-30s. These changes have increased participation nearly three times. Between 70 and 80 adjunct faculty attend these events held at the beginning of each semester.

Salary Advancement

Maricopa County Community College District offers a Faculty Professional Growth program through its Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI). This program provides residential faculty the opportunity for horizontal advancement on the salary schedule. Faculty may apply for a maximum of seventy-five (75) hours of horizontal advancement. Of these 75 hours, only 50 hours can be non-academic (per RFP A.3.3).

- Advancement for Academic Work: Salary advancements for completion of graduate and under certain conditions undergraduate coursework.
- Advancement for Non-Academic Work: Salary advancements for participation in external (sponsored outside of Maricopa) or internal (sponsored within Maricopa) clinics, conferences, workshops, or seminars. Opportunities for salary advancement are also available for work experience, travel experience, and other professional activities.

SMCC Recognizes Teaching Excellence

Innovation of the Year Awards

Cosponsored by MCCCCD and the League for Innovation, the Innovation of the Year program encourages a district-wide culture of instructional innovation. This program recognizes an individual or a team of employees who have designed and implemented a significant innovation that has made a positive impact on the education of students. One innovation is selected from each college, the skill centers, and the district office. A district-wide innovation is then selected to receive the *Dr. Paul M. Pair Innovation of the Year Award*, which includes \$2,000 to further the winning innovation. Recent SMCC Innovation of the Year Award include:

- Bilingual Nursing Fellowship Program (2004)
- Paul M. Pair Award District-wide winner (2005)- SMCC/AAEC Bioscience Collaborative (SABiCo)
- “Purpose Driven Learning” Communication Bridges to Success (2006)
- Math STAR Camp (2007)
- Increasing Cognitive Assessment (2008)

NISOD

Beginning in 2002, SMCC faculty are recognized annually by nomination to the *National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development* (NISOD).

Each year SMCC’s Vice-President of Academic Affairs nominates at least one faculty member to attend



the NISOD conference to be honored at the Excellence Awards ceremony. Winners have their way paid to the conference and receive a medal to honor their teaching accomplishments. Winners are announced at SMCC. In 2005, the Vice President for Academic Affairs began the tradition of nominating an adjunct faculty member for the award as well.

A six year list of winners is available in the Resource Room and in the [Virtual Resource Room](#).

SMCC Fosters Teaching Excellence

As articulated in its core values statement, SMCC advocates the active engagement of students and employees in “lifelong learning.” SMCC and MCCCDC not only encourage continued learning, they also support improved pedagogies by providing faculty access to an impressive breadth of professional growth opportunities at the district, college, division, discipline, and course levels. A variety of professional development activities are available to all faculty through the District’s [MCLI](#) and [EOD](#) divisions.

Teaching and Learning Center

SMCC has created an environment in which skilled teachers continue to expand, deepen, and refine their expertise. The college’s faculty development team, like the many instructional initiatives it supports, is faculty driven and led. Sixty faculty at SMCC state that professional development activities enhance their teaching ([2007 SMCC Faculty Survey](#)).

Often, small colleges do not have the resources that are enjoyed by other, larger colleges; but when it comes to professional development opportunities, SMCC is an exception to this phenomenon. SMCC’s Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) is the locus for faculty development. In keeping with its mission, the TLC offers daily development workshops. These workshops cover pedagogical techniques that can be used to engage students and to address multiple learning styles and cutting-edge technological tools to enhance learning. The following list highlights the supportive role of the SMCC’s Teaching and Learning Center:

- In the last five years, the TLC faculty and staff have developed and delivered more than 130 workshop opportunities for faculty.
- The TLC provides extensive email support (approx. 1700/month) and phone support (approx. 180/month) for faculty and staff who have training questions, need software technology support (MS Office and Blackboard), and for those who need help with the development of new content methodology, critical thinking skills applications, and with engaging students more effectively.
- In a given month, the TLC successfully accommodates nearly 200 walk-in individuals.
- SMCC’s Teaching and Learning Center training encourages and trains both full-time and

adjunct faculty to use the Blackboard course management system. This training is so successful that 74% of SMCC courses use Blackboard, the highest use of Blackboard technology per capita of any of the MCCC's ten colleges.

District Support for Teaching Excellence

Though more closely examined for its influence on acquiring, discovering, and applying knowledge in Criterion 4, Maricopa County Community College District's commitment to supporting teaching excellence must also be mentioned here. Through the District's Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (*MCLI*), the vast array of choices and possibilities for educators and staff working within the District is amazing. The Center provides faculty travel, sabbatical, and professional growth and development opportunities so broadly that no faculty or staff member wishing to continue their own life of learning would have cause to not do so.

SMCC is also committed to supporting faculty and staff as they advance their own education, or as they work on specific professional projects. The college department, division, and administrative leadership encourage faculty and staff, and willingly grant "reassign time" for projects that will further the educational goals of its employees or for educational projects that will directly impact students and their success at the college. For more information about faculty professional growth opportunities, reference Chapter 6 (Criterion 4) or the *MCLI website*.

The table below (data taken from the *2007 SMCC Faculty Survey*) indicates that the majority of residential faculty feel that SMCC supports innovative teaching and learning.

Table 5.1

	Response Total	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	32	51%
Agree	21	33%
Slightly Agree	7	11%
Slightly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	2	3%
Strongly Disagree	1	2%
Total Respondents	63	



Component 3b Summary

Both Maricopa County Community College District and South Mountain Community College individually value and support effective teaching. SMCC strives to hire excellent residential and adjunct faculty in all academic disciplines, and to provide the support and encouragement needed for faculty to pursue excellence in the classroom. Perhaps the three areas of challenge within the scope of this component are the need for developing a formal faculty mentoring program, the need for centralizing effective adjunct faculty support in each department or division, and the need for doing more as a college to provide support and recognition for our adjunct faculty.

Core Component 3c:

South Mountain Community College creates effective learning environments.

Across Maricopa County Community College District, each of the ten colleges has a distinct “personality”, a distinctive environment that has become its signature among its current students and among district community members. South Mountain Community College’s “personality” is *supportive and caring*. Countless students have reported moving to the college from another and finding the receptive nature of the staff and faculty reason to stay at SMCC and complete their academic goals. This environment, created both from within classrooms and student support services, weighs significantly when students are choosing to attend the college.

According to the SMCC 2007 National Research Center for College and University Admissions Survey results (from 1355 total students surveyed), 77.2 % of students said they would “definitely” or “probably” enroll at SMCC again if they had to do it all over again.

According to the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) administered by the college in fall 2007, students are pleased with their experiences at SMCC. More than 90% of SMCC students who took the survey (out of 397 students) evaluated “their entire educational experience” at SMCC as “good” or “excellent.”

In this same survey, students were especially satisfied with the services of Academic advising/planning, college skill labs, financial aid advising, and of the college Computer Commons. Ninety-three percent said they would definitely “recommend this college to a friend or family member”, and 72% believed the college provides the support they need to help them succeed while they are here.

These statistics are a direct result of the student-centered philosophy of South Mountain Community

College. Each of the factors below is intended to preserve or improve the college's positive learning environment:

One-Stop Services

“One-Stop Services”, a philosophical mode of providing all aspects of student enrollment in one location, is instrumental to creating a student's initial positive experience with the college. The “One Stop Services” method allows students to conduct their college business in a single contact with the college, whether the contact is on the phone, on the web, or on a walk-in basis.

If registering at the main campus, students first enter the Student Enrollment Services (SES) building, where student requests are immediately “screened” by a Student Services Technician to determine the appropriate action needed to address the request. When possible, the service or transaction requested is immediately provided by staff. As a deliberate strategy to promote learning and independence, students are instructed on how to conduct their own transactions and/or obtain information online via the self-help computers. If the information is not available electronically, the student will be given hard copies of the material requested. At this point and if appropriate, the staff will direct all non-routine, specific inquiries to a department specialist or to a specific department resource. Student Service Technicians receive ongoing cross-training to be well-versed in the skills and procedures necessary to implement the One Stop Services philosophy.

A new phone system is also being purchased allowing all phone calls to be automatically routed to the correct destination or to be answered by a trained staff member. This system will be personalized and will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It will include automated destination choices, multi-lingual voice choice, estimated waiting time, call back options, and other flexibilities.

The current Welcome Center, which is also the location of the main college operator, has been renovated and transformed into a warm, inviting, business-like atmosphere that exudes friendliness and professionalism to our students and visitors to the campus. The entrance to the SES building has also been renovated into a comfortable and attractive area that accommodates self-help computers, a small reading area with college publications, and a space for a waiting area with comfortable chairs and sofas. The off-site entrances are also being modernized to meet the same expectations.

New Student Information System

For the purposes of increasing online self-service in academic planning and resources, and financial account management for its students, MCCCCD decided to adopt a new Student Information System using People Soft programing (SIS) for district-wide use. With the new system, all of the district's col-



lege services would be unified through a single student self-service website dubbed My.maricopa.edu. Adopting the new system had been the easy part though, it seems, as the District moved toward its implementation. After three postponements, the transition from the previous system, Legacy, was finally made in February 2008, and the new SIS system “went live”. The new system consists of five modules:

- 1) Admissions
- 2) Records
- 3) Financial Aid
- 4) Student Financials
- 5) Advisement

In anticipation of the Internet learning curve as SMCC continues to work through the “bugs” of the transition, SMCC’s website offers online tutorials that are student-centered and user-friendly. My.Maricopa.edu provides video tutorials, printable quick reference guides, a “How Do I...” menu, and links to topics for further assistance.

The student benefits of the My.Maricopa.edu are many. Among them are the student’s ability to:

- Apply for admission and register for classes online
- Search for classes at ALL Maricopa colleges.
- View their class schedule, and add, drop, or exchange classes
- View their final grades online and request transcripts

The new Student Information System provides increased online self-service in financial account management such as the ability to pay for classes online, to view financial accounts and financial aid at **all** Maricopa colleges, and to easily access scholarship information.

Students are also able to find information about programs, resources, and district-wide services and policies on My.Maricopa.edu that support students in their academic endeavors.

In spite of the numerous ongoing challenges inherent in the new software system, faculty and college staff are working together with a strong spirit of collegiality to maintain the highest quality of student service possible. Assessing the impact of My.Maricopa on SMCC’s learning environment has yet to be done. The fall 2008 data shows an increase in college FTSE. Whether or not this gain can be directly related to the new Student Information System and the District philosophy of “ten colleges, one Maricopa” remains to be seen.

New Advisory Model

When South Mountain Community College was first started, and the only degree offered was the Associate of Arts, advising students regarding their educational plans was a much simpler process. At that time, the college used a “centralized model,” wherein one department provided advising to students. As the college grew, it encouraged all faculty to participate in general advising during peak registration periods. Faculty met with students “arena style” in the Student Union to facilitate course selection, and degree and program advising.

However, with the onset of the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) in 1999, the various pathways to transfer and degree attainment became more complex, and, as more and more training for faculty was required to maintain effective advisement, faculty involvement in general advising was relegated to an “as needed” basis only. General advising by faculty became essentially non-existent, and advising done by faculty shifted to “discipline focused” advising only. As the connection between Advisement and academic divisions weakened, communication between the two groups also weakened. Specific information relevant to both groups was often not well communicated, resulting in confusion for students.

Seeing the need to reestablish strong communications between SMCC academic divisions and the advising department, and to streamline the college’s process of college advising, the current President established the SMCC Advisement Model Task Force In November 2005. The president specifically charged the task force with examining how the college was providing academic advising services to students. The task force was charged to:

1. look at the current practices and procedures for how academic advising was delivered;
2. find an appropriate advising model which would formally involve faculty in the academic advising process;
3. keep student success at the core of the programs and services that we provide;
4. develop and recommend a pilot advising model for implementation in Fall 2007.

Over the next 12 months, the task force spent time clarifying the definition of the terms “Academic Advising” and “Student Success,” and conducted 10 faculty, advising staff, and student focus group sessions. A total of 45 residential faculty, 10 academic advisors, and 10 students participated in these focus groups. The focus group sessions resulted in a set of 12 key findings ([Task Force Proposal](#)) and six recommendations were set forth for the purposes of improving the way academic advising was delivered to SMCC students. In addition six recommendations were approved by the president’s executive team in April 2008, and faculty training is in progress to prepare for the spring 2009 implementation of the new advising model.



New Student Orientation

Most recently, South Mountain Community College has recognized the pressing need for orienting its new students, especially its first-generation college students, to the culture of attending college. More and more community college students nationwide are arriving at colleges under prepared, and many of SMCC's students are no exception. Student awareness of coursework and faculty expectations, opportunities to connect with campus activities, and awareness of the many support services available to them are all important factors in a student's college success. Developing an orientation that fits the specific needs of our incoming students has been a recent top priority for the college.

The Student Orientation Committee was convened during the spring of 2007 as a specific response to the work done by the Advisement Model Task Force. The committee's long hours of planning and development of SMCC's New Student Orientation culminated in the first new student orientation in spring of 2008. The program will continue to evolve in spring 2009 with the New Student Orientation Program, a program which offers associated classes to introduce new students to the expectations of college life. The online version of the *SMCC's New Student Orientation* was offered to new students in the fall of 2008.

Student Success Initiative

As part of a district wide student success initiative, SMCC will be piloting phase one of the iStartSmart® program in spring 2009 and phase two in fall 2009. During the first phase, all first-time students enrolling in 12 or more credit hours and declaring a degree or transfer intent will be required to attend mandatory advising, assessment, and orientation. This cohort will be tracked during their tenure at SMCC and/or any MCCCDC college. During the second phase, mandatory course placement will be added to the requirements for the incoming cohort. In addition to advising, assessment, and orientation, students testing into one or more developmental courses will be required to take a one-credit hour student success course along with enrolling in developmental courses during their first semester. If a student places into all three developmental courses and does not wish to complete them all during the first semester, (s)he will be advised to start with developmental reading. This second cohort will be tracked as well. Benchmarks include:

1. Number of students who complete the semester and finish at least one class
2. Number of students who enroll in the next semester (at any MCCCDC college)
3. Number of students who earn a "C" or better in all courses
4. Number of students who meet their intended goal (degree or transfer)
5. Number of students in developmental classes who successfully complete their first college-level course after the developmental class

The Chancellor and Governing Board support a systemic, district wide approach to student success and have provided \$1,000,000 in seed money. SMCC has received \$68,000 for 2008-2009 and will receive another \$68,000 for 2009-2010. The college participates in the district wide Student Success Task Force and the iStartSmart® Implementation Task Force. Future plans include broadening the cohort to include part-time students and evaluating assessment instruments for congruency with curriculum.

As part of its iStartSmart® process, SMCC will be adding supplemental instruction and enhanced tutorial support for classes in which cohort members are most likely to enroll.

Improved Placement Testing

Appropriate academic placement for students is elemental in providing effective learning and student success, and SMCC Student Services is continuously evaluating its placement testing services and the various placement tests used to place students into appropriate Mathematics, Reading, and English courses. Improved and more accurate testing improves in-classroom learning environments by providing for correct student placement in course series which are “leveled,” thereby providing for an increase in their success. If a student is incorrectly placed because the placement test is ineffective, or ill-aligned with the stated course objectives, students will either struggle to be successful if they were placed in too difficult a course, or struggle to stay challenged in a course that is perhaps not difficult enough.

Placement testing at SMCC is part of the district-wide assessment process. The college is free to select from several District approved placement exams for Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. The faculty at the college and the district are actively involved in selecting and reviewing placement instruments in mathematics, English, and reading.

In 2008, SMCC’s English Department piloted the use of WritePlacer, a placement exam which asks the student to write an essay for evaluation. English Department faculty believed that the current multiple choice, grammar-based exam was ineffective in helping accurately determine a student’s written communication skills.

The essay test was administered to two sections of ENG 071 (second course of Developmental English sequence) to determine if the test scoring was reliable enough to use as a placement instrument. The department is still in discussion about the accuracy of the online scoring rubric, and will determine whether to pursue WritePlacer as a replacement instrument for the current placement exam. It is also important to note that the replacement of a placement test must be approved through the district’s Instructional Council membership and process.



Use of Active and Collaborative Learning Techniques

In order to more effectively engage students, faculty members regularly utilize techniques that encourage active participation in the student learning process. These methods allow students to move beyond the knowledge and comprehension levels of learning to the higher levels of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

The table below shows that SMCC faculty use innovative pedagogical techniques to create effective learning environments in their classes. (*2007 SMCC Faculty Survey*)

Table 5.2

I use the following teaching strategies in my courses:	Yes	No	Response Total
Learning Communities	42% (25)	58% (34)	59
Collaborative/Cooperative/Active Learning	90% (53)	10% (6)	59
Service Learning	46% (26)	54% (30)	56
Civic Engagement	36% (21)	64% (37)	58
Experiential Learning (e.g. problem based, case studies, simulations)	81% (47)	19% (11)	58
Field Experience (e.g. internships, clinicals, practicals)	43% (24)	57% (32)	56
Labs	63% (37)	37% (22)	59
Reflective Writing Activities/Journals	68% (42)	32% (20)	62
Intensive Writing Activities	33% (20)	67% (40)	60
Research Paper	47% (28)	53% (32)	60
Projects (e.g. robots, fabrication)	61% (36)	39% (23)	59
Field Trips	33% (20)	67% (40)	60
Guest Speakers/Artists	53% (33)	47% (29)	62
Total Respondents			62

Note: The number of faculty respondents in **Table 5.3** represents only 12 adjunct faculty. The remainder claimed full-time faculty status.

As is illustrated in the table above, SMCC faculty employ a wide range of techniques specifically designed to engage the whole student. This faculty effort is strong evidence of a learning environment that, according to the college mission statement, “fosters student development.”

eLearning

Providing a variety of educational delivery methods is important to the success of the students at SMCC. Hybrid courses, online courses, Internet-supported courses, and Blackboard support for students are all part of what SMCC offers for students wishing to take alternative delivery courses.

Currently, SMCC offers 15 sections of online courses; these course types range from Business and Professional Computing to Philosophy, Religion, and Literature. The college has increased its offerings of hybridized courses, and currently offers 33 courses in this blended format. Students are encouraged to take an E-Learning quiz to determine if they will be good candidates for these types of course delivery.

Students also have 24/7 access to Blackboard, the District adopted course management system. This system allows for course information and assignment access outside of the physical classroom. Built into the software platform are email, discussion board, address book, digital drop box, calendar, “wiki” and “podcasting” tools. In addition, students can receive immediate technological support for any Blackboard use issues. Seventy-four percent of college faculty use Blackboard to enhance the effectiveness of their instruction.

Developing Courses Based on Critical Thinking Skills

SMCC’s Title V Grant cultivates institutional change by developing critical thinking skills within courses and using a holistic approach to critical thinking within all disciplines. Critical thinking is that mode of thinking - about any subject, content, or problem - in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them.

The project’s objectives state that resources and instructional modules will be developed by our faculty so that students can obtain the critical thinking skills needed to succeed in research and applied sciences. These modules incorporate some instructional strategies that allow the students to use critical thinking as they learn the content for their courses. Workshops have also been developed and delivered in the Teaching and Learning Center so that faculty can become more aware of what critical thinking is and how to implement it seamlessly into their courses. These workshops vary from topics such as classroom assessment techniques that promote critical thinking to creating higher order objectives using Bloom’s Taxonomy. The goal is to have 36 instructional modules in writing, science, math and critical thinking developed by the end of the grant in October 2010.

The critical thinking modules and assessments that are developed can be used by faculty throughout the institution, across many disciplines. The modules developed thus far have been posted on the school’s website <<http://students.southmountaincc.edu/Support/TitleV/TitleVModules/>>.



Technology in the Classroom

As part of South Mountain Community College's *Technology Plan*, classroom technologies are continuously installed and upgraded. The presence of current technology in the classroom, including but not limited to ELMO document cameras, computer instruction stations, digital video equipment, and digital projection systems, all of which impact the college's learning environment in a positive way.

In our world's information age, faculty who have immediate access to current technologies and online resources in the classroom are much more able to provide relevant, real-time information for their students. If a student asks a question for which the instructor has no immediate answer, classroom technology enables an instructor to acquire that answer as they continue their classroom instruction. Having access to real-time, global information truly enhances a student's experience in the classroom. This technological availability enables and empowers both the student and the instructor to create a more dynamic classroom exchange.

In addition to bringing a student's current world into the classroom, providing current classroom technologies prepares students for the economic and career world. SMCC's commitment to preparing our students for "productive citizenship in an increasingly global and technological society" is evidenced more and more by the advances in technology applied in each of SMCC's college classrooms.

Many other areas of the college focus on student learning and success. The financial aid department guides students through the financial aid process and mandates strong financial literacy skills by requiring that student loan recipients attend debt management classes. Student athletes are required to attend Counseling and Personal Development courses to ensure their academic success while at SMCC. Our Career Services department offers self-assessment, job search assistance, and connections to internships, service learning and volunteer opportunities.

Component 3c Summary

College systems, support services, and educational programs are all focused on student success and on providing what the mission declares as "a caring teaching and learning environment."

South Mountain Community College is doing much to maintain and enhance its already positive and effective learning environments. From the moment a student makes contact with the college to the moment they transfer to a university or walk across the stage for graduation, students experience a learning environment that is supportive, informative, and relevant to their needs as a learner and as an individual seeking to improve his or her educational status.

Core Component 3d:

South Mountain Community College's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

South Mountain Community College's learning resources are used in strong support of student learning and effective teaching. The college library (Learning Resource Center), Information Commons, Learning Assistance Center, Career Service Center, and the SMCC Counseling Department all offer specific types of student support. Students can avail themselves of academic, career, counseling, and technological services and SMCC faculty are offered extensive instructional support through the college Teaching and Learning Center.

SMCC Learning Resource Center

The library provides enormous learning resources to support student learning by offering instruction, an adequate collection, free printing and free copying of reference materials, and computer access.

The library is open on average 71 hours per week in both the spring and fall semesters, and 54 hours per week during the summer. The librarians offer many specialized classes taught by library faculty in the library to support the research needs of specific courses, and supplemental materials that instructors place on reserve in the library are available for student use. There are also, on average, 76 instructional classes delivered by librarians as guest instructors in the instructor's classroom, and over 5,000 face-to-face reference queries provided in the library each year.

The library is staffed with 3.5 FTE professional staff each year and 4.5 non-professional staff serving an average of 147,000 users per year. The library has 51 publicly accessible computers, an average of 41,000 books and other printed materials, 34,478 electronic books, 29 district electronic databases and five SMCC electronic databases available for users. When surveyed, faculty responded favorably to the prompt: "SMCC's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching." Ninety-two percent either agreed or strongly agreed with that statement. Eighty-three percent were either satisfied or very satisfied with the Academic Services at the SMCC library (*2007 SMCC Faculty Survey Virtual Resource Room*).

The library also provides adequate space and circulation to support student learning and effective teaching, and also provides resources for the community. Total circulation to students on average is 11,211; 2,743 circulation for faculty and staff, and 842 for community users. Total use of the collection, the number of books or other materials circulated annually and in-house use not circulated, was on average 16,818.

The library offers instructional support for faculty and students with the Ask a Librarian program and by developing competencies and assessments in library instruction. The Ask a Librarian online pro-



gram is available 24/7 for all students in the district. The MCCC librarians have developed materials explaining information literacy and its real-life application in the current knowledge-based society to assist faculty with developing *information literacy competencies* in students. This group also created an assessment tool for use with these competencies which is available in the SMCC library.

Planning for the new community library is focused on ensuring a comparable or higher level of service.

Information Commons

South Mountain Community College provides an exceptional community Information Commons area. Commonly referred to as the “Computer Commons,” the facility located on the second floor of the Technology Center offers students and community members much more than free internet access. Access to learning software, particularly for English as a Second Language learners, and assistance with learning and using Microsoft Office applications are part of the Commons experience.

Instructors are also encouraged to utilize the Commons for large-group computer-based activities for their students. The Commons averages more than 28,000 visits from students and community members each year.

Learning Assistance Center

The SMCC Learning Assistance Center (LAC) provides help with basic skills in math, reading, writing, computer literacy or study skills. The LAC has free tutorials and learning resources to help students prepare for both developmental and advanced courses. They provide trained tutors, tutorial videos, tutorial software, study guides, supplemental materials in a variety of subject areas, web sites and Internet access. In the past four years the LAC Learning Center had an average of 4,467 student visits per semester, an average of 714 students each week, and 5,412 student hours logged in the lab.

Student reasons for visiting the Learning Center ranged from seeking help with Blackboard to help with homework and/or general tutoring, which was the most chosen reason for visiting. Other reasons for visiting the Learning Center were class labs, computer tutorials, counseling, Internet help, study group/study room, study skills and writing assistance.

The Make-up Testing Center in the LAC proctored an average of 1,583 make up tests in the Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 semesters, and an average of 182 test during the summer sessions. Resource Room On July 1, 2008, as part of an overall college reorganization, the Make-up Testing Center’s management was assumed by the Assessment Testing Center, which frees the Learning Assistance Center to focus on direct student learning support.

Teaching and Learning Center

SMCC's Teaching and Learning Center most certainly is a core component to the college's ability to provide student learning and effective teaching. The TLC supports student learning by assisting faculty members to become more effective teachers in traditional classrooms and eLearning environments as well as by providing student orientations to Blackboard and offering other specialized class presentations in the TLC, the Computer Commons and in classrooms.

Career Services Center

The Career Services Center provides comprehensive career services to SMCC students and community members through counseling in career and life planning, providing pertinent world of work information, and advising to employment readiness. Students can access resources for self assessment, career exploration and the world of work. The center also provides Experiential Education opportunities and information about service learning activities and internship notices. University/transfer catalogs, flyers and brochures are available in the Center along with representatives from the universities who visit the campus to discuss transfer opportunities with students.

A sampling of resources includes a resume writing packet, an interviewing packet, an employment websites handout, job opportunities binders, Internet access to research job openings and gather career information, a self assessment tool (Discover), and internship, service learning and volunteerism information. The center provides presentations to students and community organizations about job search, experiential education, interviewing and deciding on a major.

Employment resources include the Maricopa Career Network, a web based search engine that students can utilize to view jobs, research employers, post resumes and apply for positions that match the student's skills and interests. Students can also search for on-campus College Work Study positions through the Career Services Center.

The Career Services Center has a virtual career center online with numerous links and up-to-date information to meet the needs of the students, our faculty and staff, and the community. There are over 200 links to assist learners in the career planning process ([Career Services](#)).

Counseling Services

As a resource for student learning, the Counseling Department is invaluable. Counseling faculty are available to assist students with successful college coping strategies, successful time management and decision making skills, and to guide students in their vocational directions, social skills attainment and improvement, and crisis counseling.



Counseling faculty are also available to provide in-class information and activities to enhance any course or curriculum. Presentations on relieving stress, managing one's homework load, career exploration, and improving communication skills have successfully addressed, again, the whole student. The department's willingness to facilitate excellence in education by collaborating with faculty from other disciplines is strong evidence of their commitment to SMCC's student body.

Component 3d Summary

SMCC's learning environments are effective and welcoming, and the college provides a variety of learning resources to support students in meeting their educational goals.

Criterion 3 Summary

Does SMCC provide student learning and effective teaching? Are we fulfilling our stated educational mission? The answer is, "Yes." SMCC faculty, staff, and resource centers seek to provide the very best for their students. The new joint library will go far to meet the combined needs of the college and the local community. SMCC's many educational programs strive for excellence, and are improving the ways they assess themselves and their curricula. The Learning Assistance Center is experiencing new tutor certification training, and the director is working to establish supplemental instruction and a genuine Writing Center within the LAC. The Teaching and Learning Center trains our teachers to be more effective ones, and promotes effective distance learning.

Students like coming here, the faculty and staff enjoy working here, and the community is very proud to have us in the neighborhood.

Are there areas of challenge and areas where improvement can take place? Again, the answer is, "Yes." The following is a list of perceived opportunities for growth within the context of Criterion 3:

Challenges

- Assessment at the course, program, and college level needs to be improved and the General Education Outcomes project and our acceptance to the HLC Assessment Institute will provide opportunities for doing so.

- Though college-wide assessment has been occurring, assessment measures are not yet clearly connected to actual student learning expectations. This is both a district challenge and a college challenge.
- Engaging adjunct faculty in assessment and professional development remains an ongoing challenge. The adjunct faculty orientation as well as individual department efforts have provided a start, but the college will have to become more systematic in its efforts.
- In proportion to our high at-risk student population and growing numbers of developmental students, few of our instructors have developmental education training. Our focus on developmental learning and retention should result in some improvement.
- Providing comprehensive learning support services at all sites and locations and for evening and weekend students continues to be a challenge. More online learning and student support tools and resources will provide some alternatives.



SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Chapter 6

Criterion 4

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

Criterion 4:

The organization 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.

South Mountain Community College is a college committed to lives spent learning. SMCC administration, faculty, and staff participate regularly in extended educational opportunities provided by the district as well as in individual interest seeking external to the college or the district.

This modeling of continuous learning by faculty works to inspire students to continue their own personal and academic educations. Several of our college staff members actually began their educational journeys here at SMCC and are now back at the college serving and encouraging students to pursue their dreams.

It can be shown that SMCC administration, faculty, and staff deeply support our students' efforts to seek, question, and think creatively. Faculty members regularly encourage students to move beyond their perceived limits, to reach higher, and to attain more for themselves. The result is increasing numbers of



Associate Degree and Certification Program graduates.

Core Component 4a:

South Mountain Community College demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

One of the enormous benefits of being a college within the Maricopa County Community College District is that the resources and opportunities provided by the district for employee “lives of learning” are truly impressive. All employees hired by the district are provided many opportunities for professional and personal growth, and the allocation of upwards of \$4.5 million annually to support the continuing growth of its more than 4,500 full-time employees is evidence that continued professional development and learning is a top priority. The district also provides specific learning support for its adjunct faculty by allocating both reassigned time and \$132,000 annually for professional growth. Resources at both the district and college level are available for faculty training, travel, conferences, and continuing education.

MCCCD Employee Professional Development Funding

Every employee group enjoys the District’s fiscal support of professional development.

Table 6.1

Employee Group	Professional Development Opportunities
Residential Faculty	Direct reimbursement (up to \$1,500 per year), or advancement in salary for completion of academic courses or non-academic activities; paid travel; sabbatical program; summer projects
Adjunct Faculty	\$750 per year for professional growth and travel activities
Professional Staff	Tuition (\$1,000/semester); seminars and workshops (\$350/semester); travel (\$700/year); paid educational leave; internship program; summer conference
Crafts	Employee mobility policies; Total District monies available, \$88,125, for tuition reimbursement, seminars, workshops, conferences and associated travel
Maintenance & Operations	Employee mobility policies; Total District monies available, \$90,521, for tuition reimbursement, seminars, workshops, conferences and associated travel; paid educational leave
College Safety	Employee mobility policies; Total District monies available, \$38,333, for tuition reimbursement, seminars, workshops, conferences and associated travel
Management, Administrative, Technological (MAT)	Maximum of \$2,500/year; seminars, workshops, conferences and associated travel; sabbaticals
All Employees (available through MCCCD and SMCC)	Tuition waiver for MCCCD courses; Day of Learning; SMCC-sponsored professional development activities (total budget of \$10,847); MCCCD opportunities: Maricopa Center for Learning & Instruction (MCLI); Creative Pathways, Employee & Organizational Learning Team (EOLT)

As seen at the end of the table, in addition to providing support for academic course work, travel, conference attendance, and educational leave, the district encourages employees to take courses within the district on the Tuition Waiver allowance. The tuition waiver allows employees and their dependents to attend courses at any one of MCCC'D's 10 colleges tuition free, requiring only individuals to pay for fees and any course supplies that are required. In 2007 South Mountain Community College employees alone submitted 219 tuition waiver requests.

While funding for professional growth is clearly a priority, the District also provides services, programs, and resources through the Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI) and through the Employee and Organizational Learning Team (EOLT).

Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI)

To foster student success, the **Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI)**, part of the MCCC'D District Office, is dedicated to supporting and advancing teaching and learning by working collaboratively with faculty, administrators, and district-wide groups to provide quality services, programs, and resources. The mission of MCLI is:

- to provide educational opportunities in effective teaching and learning practices for faculty professional development.
- to expand support for adjunct faculty professional development.
- to enhance faculty professional growth.
- to support innovation in teaching and learning.
- to increase leadership opportunities for faculty.
- to provide opportunities for collegial interaction.
- to promote the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning.
- to provide support for faculty recruitment.
- to use MCLI staff and resources effectively and efficiently.
- to provide quality services, programs, and resources to all who are served by MCLI.

A wide variety of Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction (MCLI) programs and training seminars are also available to district faculty. Each of the programs listed below is specifically designed to “grow” Maricopa’s faculty breadth and depth:



Table 6.2

Dialogue Days	Roundtable discussions to “mini” conferences with hands-on or breakout sessions designed to bring faculty together to share ideas on how to enhance teaching and learning
Faculty Development	Funds college faculty developers via six load hours per year of reassigned time. Coordinates monthly meetings of college faculty developers
International Faculty Exchange Programs	Selected opportunities for faculty to engage in international educational environments based on proposals which meet program criteria
Learning Grants	Small grants to support innovative, one-time projects designed to improve student learning
Learnshops	Multi-session workshops focusing on improved teaching and learning, such as active or multicultural learning
Maricopa Faculty Internships (MFI)	Nine-month, mentored, teaching internship has the goal of facilitating future diverse hiring pools
Maricopa Learning eXchange (MLX)	Electronic warehouse of ideas, examples and resources (packages) that support student learning

Honors Forum

MCLI also supports the Honors Forum Lecture Series, a series of six programs over the course of the fall and spring semesters. Faculty, students, staff and community members are encouraged to attend these programs. Every two years the Honors Council establishes a theme for intellectual inquiry that is the basis for the specific lectures, and is also used as the theme for Honors course content (HUM190). SMCC attendance at these programs is reflected in the chart below.

Table 6.3: Honors Forum Lecture Series Participation by SMCC

Year	Number of Events	Number of Faculty	Number of Students	Number of Other*	Total
2002/2003	5	8	103	9	120
2003/2004	6	11	132	7	150
2004/2005	6	12	126	0	138
2005/2006	6	10	95	5	110
2006/2007	6	9	67	3	79

* Participants indicating only a connection with SMCC at sign in.

Employee and Organizational Development

Employee and Organizational Development (EOD) is focused on providing professional growth support to employees. While MCLI focuses its offerings toward increased learning for faculty, EOD provides opportunities for any employee. EOD, via its Employee & Organizational Learning Team, brings programs designed to help employees function more effectively and responsibly to each college. Some of the classes that have been brought to SMCC are:

- Managing Performance: Conducting Effective Performance Conversations
- Legal Issues: Employment Law Essentials
- Stewardship of Public Resources

Wellness Maricopa

Wellness Maricopa is an organized collaborative effort of individuals within the Maricopa Community College District committed to empowering faculty and staff to make healthier lifestyle choices and informed health care decisions by providing comprehensive wellness opportunities through communication, education and screenings. Wellness is not just viewed as physical health, but encompasses seven dimensions of health: social, emotional, spiritual, environmental, intellectual, occupational, and physical health.

Wellness Maricopa offers programs at each college throughout the year. In connection with the MCCCCD Benefits Office, some of the programs offered have been the *Maximize Your Benefits* sessions, and continuing preventive health options, such as flu shots. This year programming includes wellness fairs, health screenings, flu shots and seminars. Some of the examples of events or courses that may be offered at SMCC or another nearby MCCCCD college include tobacco cessation classes, weight control classes or related programs, such as Weight Watchers @ Work, health and wellness classes, stress management classes, and fitness centers and activity classes. The tuition waiver option offered by MCCCCD assists employees when classes offered are for credit.

SMCC Professional Development Opportunities

Faculty Staff Development at SMCC is dedicated to providing growth and enrichment opportunities for all employees at the college. The college has supplemented the funding for the SMCC faculty developer provided by MCLI by allocating the equivalent of six load hours, over \$10,000 in 2007/2008, for funding the college efforts. Some of the programs that have been offered in recent years include:

- Friday Dialogue Luncheons in which SMCC employees share information about their sabbaticals, faculty exchanges, or other programs of interest, such as aging, retirement,



and naturopathy;

- Ice Cream Socials to help build collegiality and connections; and
- A Learning Conversation focusing on recent research, *Declining by Degrees*.

Employees take advantage of professional growth opportunities provided as part of the policy manuals as shown in the chart below:

Table 6.4

Professional Growth Expenditures on SMCC Employees by Employee Group

Employee Group	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of Awards	Dollars Expended	Number of Awards	Dollars Expended	Number of Awards	Dollars Expended	Number of Awards	Dollars Expended
Residential faculty								
Sabbaticals	2	\$80,284.14	3	\$163,157.64	3	\$199,500.00	2	\$123,910.00
Sum. Proj./Fees/Regis.	10	\$4,444.00	15	\$4,893.52	14	\$3,160.00	44	\$17,814.00
Travel	18	\$11,141.76	19	\$11,941.00	19	\$11,034.61	24	\$24,284.00
Adjunct faculty	4	\$1,334.00	3	\$880.00	4	\$2,397.00	4	\$3,000.00
Maintenance & Operations	3	\$413.30	2	\$7.40	8	\$2,371.76		
Safety	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00		
Crafts	8	\$5,896.05	3	\$3,978.00	6	\$7,043.52		
Professional Staff								
Educational Leave		\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00
Internships		\$39,883.00		\$32,827.00		\$0.00		\$0.00
Other		\$10,675.00		\$11,303.23		\$14,541.74		\$10,422.43
Mgmt., Admin. Tech.		\$19,000.10		\$23,946.96		\$13,879.49		\$18,391.70
Sabbaticals					1	\$10,470.00		
TOTAL	45	\$173,071.35	45	\$252,934.75	54	\$253,928.12	74	\$197,822.13

Sabbaticals are a significant benefit afforded residential faculty, and SMCC faculty has actively participated in this program. In reviewing the last four years of this program, the average number of SMCC faculty on sabbatical has been two, representing a minimum of \$80,000 expended on this program each year.

In fall 2007, all SMCC employees were surveyed about their opinion of SMCC support of professional development as well as their engagement in professional development activities. When asked if SMCC supported professional development, 104 of the 133 respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. The chart below provides a summary of the employees' responses regarding their participation in employee professional development activities.

Table 6.5

Responses from Fall 2007 Employee Survey

In the past five years I have: (please indicate the number of times)	0 times	1 or more times
Attended district sponsored workshops	13	97
Attended college sponsored workshops	8	110
Received college, district, or professional growth funding for conferences, meetings, seminars or workshops	29	62
Used tuition waivers to take MCCCCD classes	33	61

Clearly, employees are taking advantage of both district and college offered professional growth opportunities.

“Day of Learning”

When the annual all-district faculty convocation was cancelled in 2007-2008, the College decided to hold its first annual all-college Day of Learning on January 4, 2008. The day began with a pancake breakfast served by the President and Vice Presidents followed by a keynote speaker who focused on change. Breakout sessions, scheduled throughout the day, were planned around four main strands: learning, leadership, professionalism, and mind/body/spirit.

The objectives of the day were to provide an informative, engaging, relevant, and meaningful Day of Learning that would pull the campus together to focus on topics that matter for individuals and the organization. Another goal was to foster our culture of learning, teamwork, caring, and commitment. The outcomes for the day stated that the participants would:

- learn about themselves and each other during the activities at the Day of Learning.
- acquire specific skills, knowledge, abilities, and values during each concurrent session.
- know more about college projects after viewing poster sessions.
- engage in collaborative discussions which foster increased teamwork and understanding during the Day of Learning.
- leave feeling valued and recognized as an important part of the SMCC family.



Attendance for the day is shown in the table below:

Table 6.6

	Estimated	Actual	% of Total
Adjunct Faculty	15	6	40%
Crafts	4	3	75%
Faculty	60	46	77%
MAT	38	20	53%
M&O	10	8	80%
PSA	70	29	41%
Safety	5	3	60%
Students			
Others		3	
	202	118	58%

Attendance by adjunct faculty and PSA was lower than desired, due to time available for advertising and enrollment workload, respectively. In future years, it is anticipated that attendance from all groups will increase.

Anecdotal comments during the day provided immediate evidence of success in meeting the intended outcomes. Colleagues verbally shared their enjoyment of events and their excitement about the various learning topics after the keynote and breakout sessions. During the following full week of accountability, employees continued to make numerous, positive comments about the event.

Participants provided numeric feedback for each session as well as written comments. On a scale of 1 – 5 (five being the highest), no session was scored lower than 3.75 and at least three scored 5. Written comments were generally positive with a common and repeated theme being “We need more of this.” Additionally, the evaluations provided information about topics and issues for focus in ongoing training and professional development.

SMCC’s first annual Day of Learning rekindled a spirit of community, teamwork, camaraderie, and learning within the campus community. It provided a much-needed positive start to a semester of challenge and change. It allowed colleagues time and space to learn and grow together. It provided a collective acknowledgement of the worth and value of SMCC employees. And it focused on our primary mission – learning.

Recognition of Learning Accomplishments

The college recognizes the learning achievements of students and employees through formal presentation ceremonies, such as the annual Student Awards Ceremony, Innovation of the Year Awards, and the semester Convocation meetings, and informally via email announcements to the college.

Each spring semester, the Office of Student Life coordinates a formal awards ceremony during which college employees recognize students for their achievements within a variety of learning environments.

One of the college's most significant celebrations of students' learning is the annual Commencement ceremony. All faculty members and many managers march in full regalia to recognize the efforts of SMCC students. Many other employees contribute their time to complete the many activities necessary for a successful event. Others participating include at least one member of the MCCC Governing Board as well as all members of the college Executive Team. Often, those associated with the college's Music Department, as well as faculty and students, contribute to the celebration. And, of course, the celebration includes thousands of family and friends who are recognized during the event for their contribution to the success of the students. On May 9, 2008, 114 students, out of a possible 206, were present to receive the accolades from these individuals (*Graduation programs in Resource Room*).

The college has also established a tradition of recognizing the academic efforts of employees during its Convocation, a special meeting that gathers employees together on the first day back each semester. A handout contains employee updates from all areas of the college. Some of the achievements spotlighted during the program include Years of Service to the college and the District, faculty returning from sabbaticals, and employees who have received additional degrees.

The Marketing and Public Relations Department publishes a bimonthly e-newsletter, *SMCC Messenger*, which showcases myriad ways in which SMCC contributes to, and recognizes, learning efforts by faculty, students and staff. In an effort to practice green behavior, these newsletters are now distributed electronically rather than being printed in hardcopy. Therefore, each new issue is announced via email to the college community and is available for viewing on the college's website.



Component 4a Summary

South Mountain Community College demonstrates its commitment to life-long learning. Data reveals that faculty and staff participate in the many opportunities offered by both the District and by the college. The college also demonstrates that it values lives of learning by offering significant support to faculty, staff, and students in all of their quests for continued personal and professional growth.

Core Component 4b:

South Mountain Community College demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

SMCC demonstrates that breadth of knowledge and intellectual inquiry are key to its educational programs through the following:

- placing an emphasis on general education for those pursuing transfer degrees or certificates, occupational certificates and programs.
- providing opportunities for intercultural experiences for students and faculty.
- maintaining a concern for the whole person as evident in Counseling Department offerings.
- providing extensions of classroom experiences into the “real world” through clubs, service learning, and musical performances.

Continuing education and workforce development programs increase the completeness of SMCC’s programs by meeting needs of the business community as well as those not interested in pursuing a matriculated degree.

General Education and Transfer Degrees

As an educational body, SMCC and its parent, Maricopa County Community College District, is committed to providing its students with degrees, programs, and certificates which require the student to attain the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in either university transfer or the work place.

Contained within most transfer degrees and certificates is the MCCC Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC), a 35-38 semester-credit general education certificate that fulfills lower-division general education requirements for Arizona’s three state universities. Emphasizing communication, arts and humanities, numeracy, information literacy, problem solving and critical thinking, scientific

inquiry in the social and natural sciences, and cultural diversity as core areas for student study creates students with a broad knowledge base from which to question and problem solve, establish and maintain positive relationships, effectively express themselves, and to connect with and improve the worlds in which they live.

These Core Areas also link to three state required “Awareness Areas:”

- Cultural diversity in the United States
- Global awareness
- Historical awareness

Students have the opportunity to pursue a variety of transfer degrees at SMCC, of which the AGECE, with slight variation depending on degree, is a significant component. The following degrees are available from SMCC:

- Associate in Arts
- Associate in Arts with an emphasis on Elementary Education
- Associate in Arts with an emphasis on Fine Arts—Dance, Art, or Theatre
- Associate in Science
- Associate in Business, with a general or special emphasis
- Associate in General Studies
- Associate of Transfer Partnership

According to the June 2008 SMCC Graduation press release, SMCC awarded 226 degrees and 37 certificates including 140 Associates in Arts, 45 Associates in General Studies, 22 Associates in Applied Science, 19 Associates in Science, 1 Early Childhood Development Certificate, 5 Basic and 2 Advanced Behavioral Health Sciences Certificates, 1 Academic Certificate in Storytelling, 27 certificates in Networking Technology: CISCO, and 1 Supervision & Management II certificate.

Occupational Degrees and Certificates

Although begun largely as a transfer institution in response to community demands, SMCC has slowly been adding occupational opportunities in recognition of workforce needs. Students may focus on a variety of Associate in Applied Science degrees, such as Behavioral Health, Computer Information Systems, Early Childhood or Early Childhood with an emphasis on Montessori, Networking for a CISCO Environment, or Advanced Nursing. Many of these degrees and certificates also provide opportunities for students to obtain more immediate employability by only pursuing a certificate option. One unique academic certificate that students are able to pursue is in Storytelling, a skill that is multidisciplinary in its application and in many work settings.



Another unique program available to students at SMCC is the Bilingual Nursing Fellowship Program, a partnership with GateWay Community College (GWCC) in which students pursue their general education needs at SMCC and complete their nursing courses at GWCC.

Career Fair

The Career Services Center at South Mountain Community College has hosted an annual Career Expo for the past seven years. Each year the college has successfully held the event in the outdoor Learning Resource Center patio area, attracting a wide variety of employers and hundreds of students and community members. These learners research employers, learn about possible fields of study to assist in choosing a major, complete informational interviews to find out more about a field or job, and practice their networking and interviewing skills by speaking with employers and university representatives. In 2008, the South Mountain Community College Career Expo was host to 67 organizations and received more than 600 students and community members.

Intercultural Experiences

In addition to courses designed for learning about cultures, such as Intercultural Communication (COM 263), Multi-Cultural Psychology (PSY 132), Intercultural Perspectives (HUM 260), or English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, there are many other avenues through which students learn about other cultures.

Students have an opportunity through experiences of their fellow students. Within the last year, international and immigrant students at South Mountain Community College have come from five continents and over 20 countries, including North America (Mexico and Canada), Central America (Costa Rica, Guatemala, and El Salvador) South America (Brazil and Columbia), Europe (England/United Kingdom, Poland, Romania, The Ukraine, and Russia), Africa (Somalia, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo) as well as Asia (Indonesia, The Philippines, The Peoples' Republic of China, Nepal, Vietnam, and Korea) and the Middle East (Palestine).

SMCC offers many educational opportunities for gaining global awareness. These include:

- International Friends student club, offering events and activities for international students
- International Week (fall and spring semesters) promoting global awareness
- English Language Conversation Club, conducted by SMCC native English speaking students and volunteers
- Festivals with Student Life, highlighting different cultures/ethnicities, such as Native Americans Heritage Week, African-American Month and Hispanic

Heritage Month

- African, Indian, Islamic and Asian cultural festivals (fall and spring semesters).
- Study Abroad programs for language and cultural development (Spain, Czech Republic and Mexico)
- Guest speakers on cultural and educational themes, related to the arts and sciences.
- International storytelling, such as Irish storytellers or other storytelling programs focusing on other cultures

Students also gain understanding of other cultures when faculty participate in exchange programs such as those in Mexico, Australia, Spain or with Wuyi University in China, and then incorporate their experiences into their teaching.

Personal Development and Counseling

The Counseling Services Department plays an integral part in helping students develop the personal skills needed to become an effective member of society. Counselor interactions with students focus on:

- Assisting with personal and career decisions
- Strategizing processes to achieve academic and career goals
- Identifying, understanding, and developing skills to resolve personal concerns that impede academic success

By learning about themselves and developing their interpersonal skills, students not only expand their knowledge base, but also increase their capacity for learning, both in the classroom and for the rest of their lives. Specific courses, classroom presentations or personal sessions target areas such as:

- Increasing self-confidence, motivation, assertiveness, and self-esteem
- Balancing life roles
- Controlling test anxiety and coping with stress
- Resolving personal problems
- Dealing with problems involving alcohol or drug use
- Developing more satisfying relationships and improving communication skills
- Dealing with grief, trauma, or loss
- Overcoming procrastination and other self-defeating habits and behaviors

In 2007/2008, Counseling provided 45 classroom presentations for various Education, ESL, English, Reading, and Communication courses, as well as provided additional information for students involved in the college's Students Transfer with Educational Preparation (STEP) program. The department also provided more than 250 critical one-on-one sessions for SMCC students (*SMCC Counseling Dept*).



Student Services

As an integral supporting entity at South Mountain Community College, Student Services, and the departments within its scope, does much to contribute to a student's breadth of knowledge and skills. A primary goal of Student Services is to create student independence by providing the information necessary to make strong, effective educational and career decisions. The Student Services vision and mission statements focus on creating students who can successfully navigate all aspects of college life. These might include, but are not limited to, advisement, registration, financial aid acquisition, career exploration, or connecting socially during their college experience. More about Student Services can be read in Chapter 4 and Chapter 7.

Student Life and Leadership

Participation in Student Life and Leadership, SMCC Clubs, and the Student Governance Board enables students to gain skills in leadership and to discover the benefits of civic engagement. Through the diverse offerings of experiential learning activities, special projects, and supportive services, students expand their knowledge beyond the traditional classroom into the classroom of the world. Through participation in Student Life programs the student is able to:

- Identify and apply diverse leadership strategies and skills
- Develop and apply organizational skills to establish Student Governance Board and Club goals and objectives, conduct meetings, plan events, and conduct evaluations
- Develop and utilize problem solving and critical thinking skills
- Develop and utilize effective oral and written communication skills
- Recognize and apply time and stress management strategies for balancing education, service, work, and leisure
- Develop intercultural competence and skills needed to live, work and serve in a diverse society
- Develop and apply civic responsibility, leadership values, and skills with a specific emphasis on leadership for social change

By becoming active members of the Student Governance Board or of any of SMCC's Clubs, listed below, students gain greater knowledge of themselves and provide important services to their respective communities.

- Student Governance Board
- Amigos Latinos (ESL)
- Athletic Club
- Behavioral Health Services (BHS)
- Bilingual Student Nursing Association (BSNA)

- Black Student Union
- Circle of Nations (Native American club)
- Exceder (Translation: To Exceed Boundaries)
- Future Educators of Americans (FEA)
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Straight Union Club (GLBSU)
- MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán)
- MANRRS Club (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources Related Science)
- Phi Theta Kappa (Honor Society)
- SHPE de SMCC (Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers)
- Spirit Club
- Spotlight Productions (Drama Club)
- Students Transfer with Educational Preparation (STEP) Club
- Young Latinos Associated (YLA)

Volunteerism

Throughout the fall 2006 semester, students, faculty and staff participated in community service, civic engagement and volunteer activities all over the Phoenix Metropolitan area. Focal areas included the environment, youth, athletics, feeding the hungry, multicultural awareness and fund raising for the advancement of medical research. The fall semester 2006 resulted in 454 students, 134 staff and 137 faculty providing 1,808 hours of service to the community. SMCC students participated in multiple events, such as St. Mary's Food Bank distribution, Native American Recognition Days, Make-A-Difference Day, and various clothing drives.

Four of the most notable successes were:

- Freedom Walk for Patriot's Day - September 11, 2006. 200 participants walked on SMCC main campus.
- Phi Theta Kappa - Fall 2006. Students participated in over 500 hours of multiple PTK events, activities, meetings and fund raising.
- Behavioral Health Services - Fall 2006. Students participated in over 750 hours of community service at organizations promoting the learning & practice of Behavioral Health.
- Ajo Little League Baseball - June 1, 2006. Baseball team participated in over 336 hours spent training young athletes.

SMCC Creative Arts

SMCC's visual and performing arts are a vibrant addition for students and the community, both as performers/creators and as members of the audience. Annually, SMCC produces two dance concerts, one musical (every other year), three theater productions, two vocal concerts, two piano concerts, two



band concerts, one jazz festival, one strings workshop, in addition to the annual Messiah concert, the annual Phoenix Symphony concert, Ballet Under The Stars, and the SMCC Mariachi concert.

Performing arts students have achieved several distinctions, including winning awards in piano competitions, performing at invitational dance festivals and/or showcases, performing in local and regional music and dance festivals, and performing with local dance and theater companies. Several SMCC students have performed professionally after graduation.

The Art Program has been winning major awards. For the last 3 years, SMCC students have been selected to represent all of MCCCCD to be juried into the National League for Innovation Art Show. This includes having their work displayed in a public exhibition held in a different part of the country each year. Art faculty are also noted for numerous professional activities within the surrounding communities, including serving on arts boards and commissions, judging art competitions, lecturing, and having their own artwork exhibited in community galleries.

The SMCC Theater Department has won numerous award nominations (15) since it began participating in statewide theater competitions in 2004.

Workforce Development

South Mountain Community College recognizes that in order for students to succeed in a global, diverse, and technological society, they must acquire knowledge necessary for independent learning as well as crucial workplace skills. SMCC demonstrates its continued commitment to workforce development by providing both credit and non-credit courses in a variety of disciplines. Customized training opportunities are developed via on-site visits and surveys of industry partner needs and expectations. Specific needs include:

- On-the-job growth and development
- Learning languages in the workplace
- Specific classes tailored to the needs of the company

An example of specialized services includes Speedy Spanish, a credit course that was offered to the Arizona Diamondbacks during summer 2008. Thirty-six Diamondback employees received instruction tailored to meet the needs of employees of a professional baseball team. A student study guide was developed using Spanish terms that an employee in various employee groups would need to serve customers coming to the ballpark for a game.

A second example is a SMCC Microsoft Office 2007 non-credit training that was developed and tailored to meet the needs of employees of Tempe Union High School District. A pre-training survey was administered to all employees prior to commencement of training to determine their needs and

expectations. A series of five sets of workshops were then scheduled with outlines of content to be covered. Participants received a student resource guide to aid in learning and for future reference. See Chapter 7 for more information and examples of Workforce Development.

Component 4b Summary

SMCC has demonstrated that breadth of knowledge and skills and intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs by the emphasis on general education requirements supplemented by courses connected with occupational programs, and the learning opportunities provided by the Counseling Department. The learning that students gain by participating in such extra-curricular options as Student Life, international activities, the Honors program, and volunteerism are further evidence of the breadth of knowledge, skills, and intellectual inquiry at SMCC.

Core Component 4c:

South Mountain Community College assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

Through the evolution of the college's program review process, the District curriculum development and review process, and the influence of advisory councils on programs, the College assesses the usefulness of curricula in meeting the needs of students living and working in future society.

Program Review

After the 1999 HLC visit, SMCC was asked to develop a more systemic process for conducting program review and submit a report by 2002. This first process was developed with much faculty input, both by committee as well as providing avenues for the faculty as a whole to review the process as it was developed.

One of the primary struggles that faced the development of the college's initial process, as well as the succeeding refinements and redesign, was the difficulty of defining SMCC "programs", given that a significant component of the curriculum is focused on transfer, which encompasses all divisions rather than more finite occupational programs. In designing the first process for program review, the goal was to avoid a "silo" approach of focusing only within divisions while not making the program so broad that it looked at virtually the entire curriculum as a program.



Thus, in the first program review process, the college used the Arizona General Education Core (AGEC) requirements as well as stand-alone occupational programs, such as Dynamic Learning (teacher preparation), Storytelling, and CISCO. The AGEC programs were:

- First-Year Composition
- Literacy and Critical Inquiry
- Mathematical Studies
- Humanities and Fine Arts
- Social, Behavioral and Natural Sciences
- Cultural Diversity in the United States
- Global Awareness
- Historical Awareness

Implemented fully in 2003/2004, the focus of this version relied heavily on statistical measures with some additional qualitative comments. Faculty concerns about the process, together with the arrival of a new Vice President of Academic Affairs, eventually resulted in a revamping of this process into what is currently being used.

After a year to review and redefine the process, programs to be measured were identified as listed below:

Type of Program			
Transfer	Developmental	“Stand Alone” Occupational/Academic	Learning Sites, Support Services, & Resources
Associate of Arts	English	Behavioral Health	Achieving a College Education
Associate of Science	ESL	Bilingual Education	Ahwatukee Center
Associate of General Studies	Mathematics Reading	Bilingual Nursing	Counseling and CPD
		CISCO	Guadalupe Center
		Dynamic Learning	Honors
		Early Childhood Development	Laveen
		ESL Program	Learning Assistance Center
		Information Technology	Library
		Montessori	Life-long Learning
		Storytelling Institute	Teaching & Learning Center
			Workforce Development

In the new process, these programs would be measured every five years. In 2007/2008, the first year using the new process, CISCO, Developmental Education for Mathematics and English and Reading, Early Childhood Education and The Teaching and Learning Center service area conducted their program review. In 2008/2009, these programs will be measured: Achieving a College Education (ACE), the Associate of General Studies, Developmental Education for ESL, the Learning Assistance Center/

Academic Excellence Center, and music, art and theatre fine arts which include the following degrees and certificate of completion:

- Associate in Arts, Fine Arts – Art
- Associate in Arts, Fine Arts – Theatre
- Associate in Applied Science in Music Business
- Certificate of Completion in Music Business

Also, the new process is focused on the demand for the program; how each program develops curriculum and ensures curriculum is current and relevant; student learning outcomes; program efficiency and effectiveness; faculty credentials and evidence of continuous learning; and facilities needs and use. In the new model, the APRASL Committee reviews the reports and adds additional content based on their reflection, research, and analysis. The committee, with the assistance of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, summarizes their recommendations and presents the summary to program faculty.

Finally, the Vice President of Academic Affairs summarizes the report for the President and the College's Executive Team. Thus, the culmination of this process includes the critical analysis of these indicators to provide a mechanism for identifying and documenting the program improvement needs so that these needs can be funneled into the college improvement and growth process.

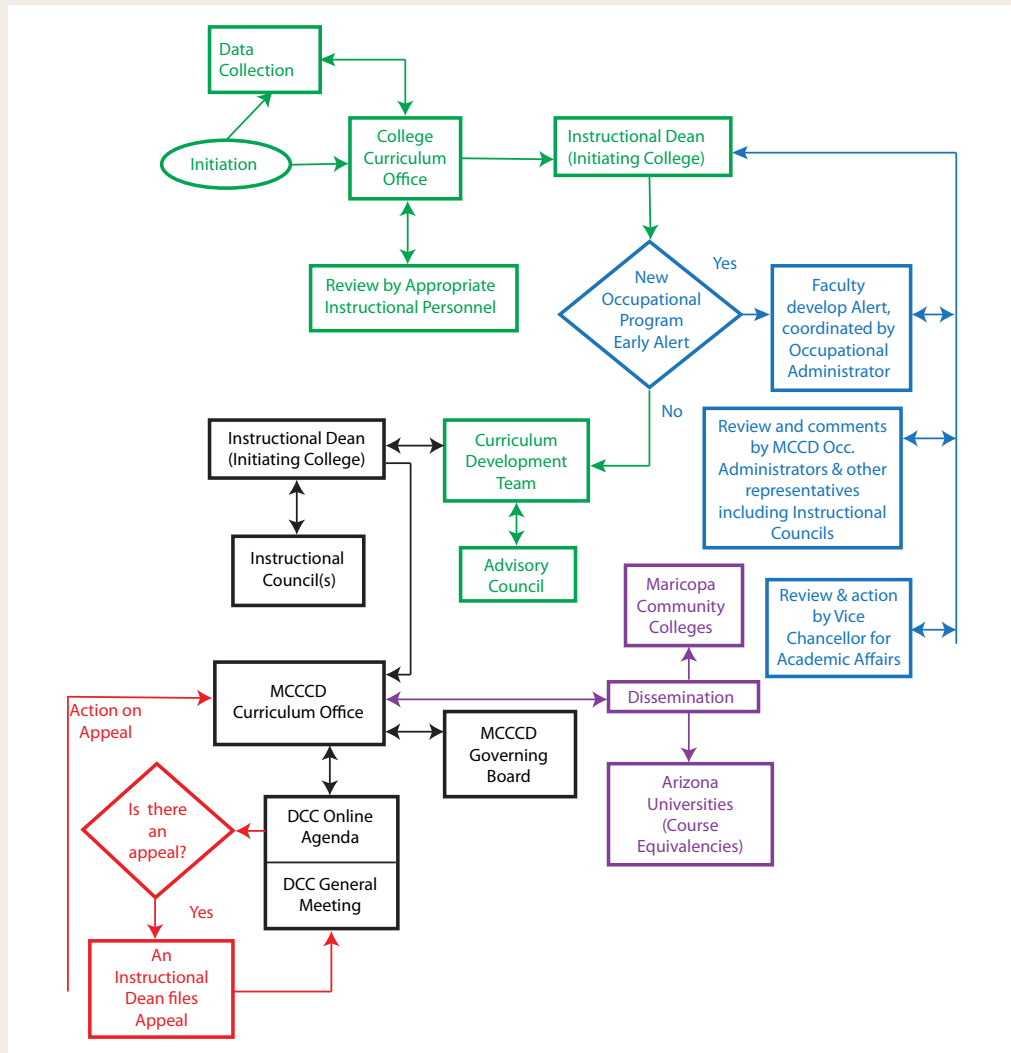
Curriculum Development and Assessment

SMCC values the creation, evaluation, and review of new and existing curricula and is supported through the *MCCCD Center for Curriculum and Articulation Transfer (CCAT)*, a division of Academic Affairs. This organization manages the process of course and program development in the District. CCAT has developed a detailed handbook outlining the curriculum process, roles and responsibilities, and procedures that all MCCC colleges must follow. A highly developed model of curriculum process facilitation is overseen by the District, but new curricula and revisions to existing curricula are initiated by college faculty at the various colleges. During the curriculum process, input from internal and external constituencies is continually sought. The District Instructional Councils, as well as external District Advisory Councils, review curriculum proposals as they are submitted. Input is also solicited from the Articulation Taskforces to determine equivalencies at the three Arizona state universities.



The following diagram illustrates the details of the curriculum development process currently in use by MCCC:

Chart 6.1



SMCC is involved in the continual development of new curriculum for MCCC through its membership and participation on both the District Curriculum Committee (DCC) and the SMCC College Curriculum Committee.

When a faculty member or division decides to submit a proposal for a new or revised course or program, the initiator works closely with the college Curriculum Development Facilitator (CDF). The Curriculum Development Facilitator is a faculty member who is granted reassigned time to act in this role and is one who helps the initiator in developing the proposal.

Upon completion of all necessary forms and documents, the proposal is sent to the College Curriculum Committee, a committee cochaired by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Curriculum Development Facilitator. Upon subsequent approval by the college president, the proposal is sent to the District Director of Curriculum and Transfer Articulation for final approval by the District Curriculum Committee (DCC).

Since the last accreditation visit in 1999, the college Curriculum Committee has been involved in developing or modifying 79 new courses. The majority of these courses fall into three degree or certification categories: Behavioral Health, Information Technology, and Early Childhood Development.

As SMCC initiates and develops new curricular options for its students, a Curriculum Technician, a college staff member charged with the task of ensuring that there are no hidden pre-requisites required in new programs, carefully filters through new proposals as a student advocate. This position ensures students increased efficiency in the degree or certification seeking process.

Faculty Role and Involvement in Curricular Design and Development

MCCCD and SMCC faculty initiate new and modified curricula, participate in Articulation Task Force (ATF) meetings, serve on college-level curriculum committees, and comprise the membership of all MCCCD Instructional Councils. Faculty participating on an ATF are responsible for overseeing course transfer procedures, developing specific hiring qualifications, and addressing other issues common to the discipline. The District Curriculum Committee evaluates new courses and programs as well as course and program modifications using district-wide curriculum standards as a guide.

The instructional council for each discipline, made up of faculty representatives from the ten Maricopa Community Colleges, is responsible for evaluating course and occupational program proposals submitted by any college-level curriculum committee. Curriculum proposals are evaluated for the quality and appropriateness of the content and the impact of the proposal on the discipline.

According to the SMCC 2007 Faculty Survey, faculty believe that they are sufficiently involved in curriculum design. Faculty responded to the statement, “I have the appropriate level of involvement in designing curriculum.”

Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Total
49% (31)	33% (21)	13% (8)	5% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	63



External Accreditation

Although SMCC offers few programs that require external accreditation, the Certificate of Completion in Early Childhood Development: Montessori, and the Associate of Applied Science in Early Childhood Development are two such programs. The Montessori certificate program requires accreditation by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE). A unique community college program in the region, SMCC received accreditation in these programs in fall 2007.

While other schools have programs in nursing which require external accreditation, SMCC's involvement in nursing programs is via the Associate in Applied Science in Advanced Nursing or the Bilingual Nursing Fellowship Program, in which SMCC delivers only the component general education courses. Therefore, no external accreditation of these degrees is required for SMCC.

Advisory Councils

Many SMCC occupational programs, such as the Early Childhood Development program, CISCO, telecommunications, business, or behavioral health, use advisory councils to ensure that students completing these programs will have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform the roles needed by these professions. Trends in how advisory councils are used reveal that they meet regularly, at least once a semester or more, when programs are forming or being disbanded, or when curriculum changes are being considered. Access to the community professionals may be through electronic means, such as in the case of the information technology arenas, but more often is conducted in face-to-face meetings. Concern for using community members' time efficiently results in scheduling meetings only when input is required to ensure curriculum is meeting current workforce needs.

Faculty Survey Results

Based on the fall 2007 survey of faculty, results reveal that outcome assessments have led teachers to upgrade or incorporate more technology in the classroom, in addition to other activities and practices that encourage the use of new technologies and interaction of diverse students on collaborative ventures. However, only 66% agree that students are gaining a global perspective. These average results indicate an area upon which the college needs to focus more energy. Indeed, the data reveals that greater numbers of faculty have not participated in an assessment at the curriculum or course level regarding preparing students to function in a global, diverse society within the past two years, although the data is more evenly distributed regarding assessment of curriculum for a technological society.

Please indicate whether or not you have participated in an assessment of the curriculum or course to determine its usefulness to students functioning in a global society in the past TWO years:

	Yes	No
A global society	33%	67%
A diverse society	37%	63%
A technological society	43%	57%

Full-time faculty = 60 (58 for technological society)

These results may indicate a direction for future assessment efforts by college faculty.

Component 4c Summary

Although South Mountain Community College has intensified its engagement in the curriculum assessment process by revising its program review process, the District curriculum process, while concerned with maintaining quality, is sometimes unresponsive to immediate needs for change. In addition, though faculty are involved both at the college and at the district levels of curriculum design and assessment, faculty must be more conscious in their efforts to ensure that the curriculum reflects 21st century needs for a global, diverse and technological society.

Core Component 4d:

South Mountain Community College provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

Throughout an employee's working career for SMCC and MCCCDC, he or she is continually educated on policies required for responsible academic behavior. Students are also informed of appropriate academic behavior, and an established set of processes are in place to ensure that inappropriate behavior is corrected.

Policies and Training

All employees of MCCCDC are encouraged to attend new employee orientation and continuing employee training on a variety of topics related to employment with Maricopa. Each year, employees receive



The Blue Book: an Essential Guide for Maricopans, a manual compiled by MCCC's *Office of the General Council* that includes selected Administrative Regulations which define the rules related to such areas as electronic communications, sexual harassment, non-discrimination and many others. These and other regulations are also found on the Office's website. In addition, the actions of each employee group are guided by its own policy manual that is jointly negotiated with the MCCC Governing Board each year.

Beginning in 2007-2008, a new annual process was implemented requiring employees to verify compliance with a variety of MCCC policies. To ensure knowledge of these policies, the *MCCC Department of Employee and Organizational Development* develops and offers online training in required topics such as FERPA compliance, public sector employment, disclosure reporting, and MCCC public stewardship. Some of the other voluntary topics offered include a series of supervisor workshops, workshops to improve employee hiring and evaluating practices, and the MOSAIC series on Maximizing Our Strengths as An Inclusive Community. Many of these programs have been brought to SMCC to facilitate participation by college employees.

Privacy of Student Records/FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

SMCC conducts itself responsibly in protecting students' rights in regard to compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). With the advent of the new Student Information System which became operational in fall 2007, all employees who access this system must complete an online tutorial to guarantee that they are following FERPA rules. There have been no violations on record of any FERPA regulations by SMCC nor have there ever been any complaints regarding the privacy of a student's education records.

Academic Freedom

Both the Residential Faculty Policy Manual and the Adjunct Faculty Policy Manual contain language that protects the rights of faculty "...to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, and they should exercise their best effort to ensure topics are relevant to their subject." (RFP 3.1; AFP 14) There have been no reports of abuse of this right by faculty at SMCC.

Academic Misconduct

In line with MCCCDCD guidelines, SMCC students are educated in, and made aware of, District policy concerning the implications and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct. MCCCDCD academic misconduct policies are available in the [SMCC Catalog](#), and faculty include wording from this policy in their course syllabi. The faculty report that student consequences for plagiarism and academic misconduct are adequate.

- More than 70% of the faculty responding to a survey in fall 2007 agree that SMCC students are educated in and aware of the implications and consequences of plagiarism. 80-90% of the faculty responding discuss their policies on plagiarism with their classes.
- More than 90% of faculty responding to this survey agree that the consequences to students at SMCC for plagiarism are adequate.

Copyright

The Library, Copy Center, and College Technology Services have policies in place to help ensure that the college complies with all copyright and licensing regulations. The Library has appropriately posted the MCCCDCD copyright guidelines on their website as well as on copiers, as required by law. The Library has implemented interlibrary loan operations that conform to the requirements as specified in the guidelines and the law. When questions about copyright compliance arise, the Library researches the question and obtains an analysis from MCCCDCD's Office of the General Counsel, if necessary. Library operations are adjusted, if necessary, to maintain copyright compliance. The Library and Copy Center also make every reasonable effort to ensure that licensing regulations are followed.

College Technology Services is extremely diligent in ensuring that all software installed and used on campus computers complies with the appropriate software licenses.

Component 4d Summary

South Mountain Community College provides strong support to ensure that its faculty, students and staff are all aware of the ethical issues inherent in responsible knowledge acquisition. The issuing of clear, publicly articulated policies concerning academic freedom, privacy of student records, copyright laws, and academic misconduct provide the college with strong guidance concerning responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge.



Criterion 4 Summary

SMCC has policies in place that maintain and monitor academic and professional integrity and responsibility. Continued improvement in the areas of program review and attention to specific course curricular review will improve the depth of knowledge students can attain at the college. One concern is that students, on the *2007 SMCC CCSSE survey*, revealed that often curriculum is a) not meeting their intellectual needs, and b) is not asking them to go beyond where they have already been academically. Working to create more intellectually challenging expectations in our courses will do much to model our own love of life-long learning.

Sampling of Successes

- SMCC faculty and staff embrace district and college-offered opportunities for professional growth and development.
- A much improved Program Review process and format has been established which results in effective evaluation of college programs.
- The college and district commit significant resources toward faculty, staff, and student development.
- The college and district provide clear guidelines and policies concerning academic integrity, student privacy, and copyright policy.

Challenges

- Curricula at SMCC must be made more challenging for students. They have, through the CCSSE survey, asked for more academic rigor in classes.
- There is a growing need for curricular assessment focused on preparing students for a global, diverse society.
- There is more that could be done to publicly honor and recognize faculty, staff and students for their professional and academic achievements.
- The college needs to focus on fostering and supporting creativity and innovation in teaching and knowledge acquisition in students.



SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Chapter 7

Criterion 5 Engagement and Service

Criterion 5:

As called for by its mission, South Mountain Community College identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

When the Criterion 5 committee began to gather and evaluate evidence for their components, it became obvious that the volume of evidence was enormous. Because South Mountain Community College originated from the call to serve its communities, many of the college's services and programs are designed around community engagement and service.

In the process of deciding which evidence to use in the report, the committee decided that the organization of this chapter would be different from the other criteria chapters. To better illustrate SMCC's fulfillment of the commission's Criterion 5 components, the committee chose to gather evidence into three "types:" those connected to "workforce development," those connected to "college student services," and those connected to "college community outreach." Under each of these headings the committee has placed several examples of programs and services, addressing how each of these programs and/or services met the criterion component requirements. Select-



ing only a few examples was one of the biggest challenges of the committee, because they found so many cases of strong community engagement and service.

The four criterion components used to evaluate each of the eleven programs and services presented in this chapter are:

Component 5a: The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

Component 5b: The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

Component 5c: The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

Component 5d: Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

At the end of each section is a brief summary and a listing of successes and challenges connected to the specifics of that section. An overall Criterion 5 summary is provided at the end of this chapter.

Workforce Development

South Mountain Community College has been intermittently engaged in workforce development since its creation in 1979. However, it has actively concentrated greater efforts and resources to the program since FY 2001-2002 when workforce development became a focal point for the college. At that time it was listed as a college priority in college strategic plans.

More recently (2007), the college reassessed its service area workforce needs as well as the current community/business connections maintained by college departments. This assessment resulted in the naming of an Associate Dean of Occupational Education and Workforce Development, and a more focused plan for growing SMCC's workforce connections.

To ensure that SMCC is responsive to the needs of its internal and external constituents, many new processes have been developed:

- Streamlined third party billing process in collaboration with SMCC Business Services
- Creation of an SMCC Workforce Development web page
- Collaboration with advisory committees from various agencies
- Monthly workforce training reports to the college president and executive staff

While Workforce Development at SMCC has many facets, the college has chosen to present the following three programs as examples of Criterion 5 evidence: the Bilingual Nursing Fellowship Program, the Behavioral Health Sciences Program, and the college's Early Childhood Education Program.

Bilingual Nursing Fellowship Program

As a direct response to the growing need for Spanish speaking nurses, South Mountain Community College (SMCC) has partnered with GateWay Community College (GWCC) and Arizona's largest health provider, Banner Health to create the *Bilingual Nursing Fellowship Program (BNFP)*. The program is a "seamless" academic partnership between SMCC and GWCC which utilizes a common application procedure and "mirrored" support services at both campuses as part of a student-centered professional program.

The main intent of this program is to graduate Spanish speaking nurses who can serve the thousands of Spanish-speaking patients receiving care in our local hospitals and clinics.

(5a) The BNFP continually learns from students, faculty and its advisory committee. The BNFP advisory committee consists of faculty, managers, administrators and staff representatives from SMCC, GWCC, and Banner Health Arizona.

This committee is charged with analyzing and identifying solutions to problem areas as identified through the student's monthly course performance tracking sheets, regular meetings of nursing faculty and clinical site supervisors, procedural and curriculum changes and "plus/delta" evaluations conducted on each BNFP student group every semester. In addition, the committee participates in the recruitment and selection of the nursing students.

Each graduating RN group is asked to complete a formal survey evaluating their experience in the nursing program. The categories measured include: nursing responsibilities (therapeutic communication and care, safety, ethics, code of conduct); overall satisfaction (instructors, courses and career choice); employment (when job search started) and life long learning (seeking BSN and advanced training). The baseline data is tracked and compared to other groups and adjustments are made accordingly. The changes have included adding additional study time with Nursing instructors, adding and deleting classes, and making course sequence adjustments.

(5b) The three BNFP partners are fully committed to, and have the capacity for, the success of the program. SMCC, GWCC, and Banner Health brought their respective expertise and resources to develop this program as an integrated two-year (and a three-year RN) program to increase the retention of professional nurses to serve the Spanish speaking populations. Participants earn an Associate in Applied Sciences Degree in Nursing and complete all the requirements to attain Registered Nurse licensure.



SMCC coordinates the program, leverages its presence in the minority community for participant recruitment and support, and provides instructional expertise in preparing students by offering all Nursing prerequisites. GWCC provides its fully developed and accredited Nursing Program, its professional nursing staff and the state-of-the-art Center for Health Careers, which includes classrooms and labs modeled after a fully functioning hospital. Banner Health provides ready access to the workplace, industry expertise, and ultimately, an employment track for program graduates.

In the six years of the program, 155 BNFP students have completed their Certified Nursing Assistant program; 106 students have completed the Licensed Practical Nurse requirements; and 86 students have earned their Registered Nurse licensing. In terms of retention, the program experiences a 95% persistence rate from start of semester to end of semester, and an 89% in end of semester to next semester.

Since the beginning of the program, 54 BNFP students have elected to participate in the Banner Health scholarship and employment program. A total of 21 (or 35%) of our RN graduates are currently working for Banner while 33 students committed to work for Banner are still taking their nursing classes. The rest of the BNFP graduates are working for St. Luke's Hospital, Mesa General, and Maricopa Medical Center. The number of students choosing to work for Banner will increase each semester since many of students choose the Banner scholarships as they come closer to their graduation.

(5c) The BNFP is unique in that it was specifically designed to carry out a community request. The genesis of the program was a direct response by South Mountain Community College to local hospitals and community residents to address the critical shortage of Spanish speaking nurses in our community.

The need for bilingual nursing in Maricopa County is best illustrated by three factors: rapid population growth, decline in the number of nurses in the area, and the large numbers of Hispanics especially increasing proportions of Spanish-speaking patients. In the Phoenix area, three local Banner Health hospitals report over 10,000 requests monthly for Spanish to English translation and the Maricopa Medical Center reports over 80,000 of these requests annually.

The BNFP insures responsiveness to the needs of its stakeholders by implementing a comprehensive system of student support including: student recruitment, academic tracking and monitoring, student retention seminars, tutoring, and professional mentoring.

(5d) The BNFP receives unanimous positive response from community residents, stakeholders, hospitals and health care providers, as evidenced by their support of the program. The program has received numerous awards including being selected as the 2008 *Example of Excelencia* and highlighted in their national publication, *What Works for Latino Students*. The Program also received the Innovator of the Year award from MCCCDC, and has been acknowledged at a number of community events and banquets. The program's contribution has been highlighted in many English and Spanish magazines, newspaper, radio and TV shows.

The continued partnership with Banner Health Systems is a testament to community support since students are provided with financial assistance and employment opportunities with local hospitals.

Through the auspices of our local congressman, SMCC has received \$1,095,165 in five different allocations from the Federal Government for student stipends and scholarships. Proposition 301 monies were received to pay for staffing. In addition, SMCC and GWCC were awarded U.S. Department of Education Title V funds to support nursing faculty, a new biology lab for SMCC, a SIM (an electronic simulation of a human body) and other nursing equipment at GWCC and academic support for our students.

SMCC, as well as GWCC, demonstrate that they value the program by providing classrooms, laboratories, technology, supplies and offices for faculty and personnel, and by paying a portion of salaries for administrators and faculty dedicated to the program. The BNFP receives favorable comments from the students -- who are the program's greatest asset and supporters. Many of the graduated students have commented that without the BNFP and its cohort model they would never have completed the nursing courses.

Behavioral Health Sciences Program

The primary goal of SMCC's Behavioral Health Sciences Program is to prepare students for careers as behavioral health technicians, case managers, parent aides, family advocates, psychiatric aides, peer counselors, respite care workers, and paraprofessional counselors. The program includes courses designed to provide students with the skills necessary to deliver basic, specialized, and comprehensive behavioral health services. The core focus of the program is to offer community responsive practical training and service learning experiences. The secondary goal is to enhance behavioral health services in Arizona by offering affordable continuing education seminars and classes for licensed and non-licensed professionals in the field. The program is also designed to encourage students in the program to continue their education through graduate school and to grow in the profession.

(5a) The BHS program learns about the needs of the community, and maintains strong connections with community constituents. The BHS program emerged as a direct response to an identified need to address the shortage of behavioral health paraprofessionals in the community workforce. After conducting an environmental scan, the BHS Advisory Board was formed as a mechanism to build a community responsive behavioral health paraprofessional training program.

In 1995, SMCC began offering and teaching BHS courses to working paraprofessionals interested in honing their human services and counseling skills. Since there was no State licensing at the time, many felt that it would be advantageous to seek a certificate or degree for credentialing purposes. The program sought the guidance of local agency directors and representatives from the State Department of Health/Division of Behavioral Health. These seasoned professionals served as the first official BHS Advisory Board.



(5b) The BHS program is engaged with and maintains strong connections with the community through the BHS Advisory Council and ongoing dialogue with community partners. Through this continued engagement, the BHS curriculum, and the terminal BHS certificate and degree programs, were developed.

Through the BHS Advisory Board and ongoing engagement and dialogue with community partners, SMCC learned of the workforce shortage of paraprofessionals in the behavioral health field, and the need for more trained technicians and assistants. A local community agency (META, now Recovery Innovations of Arizona, or RIAZ) was seeking a community college partner to offer a BHS certificate and Recovery Counseling Degree for their clients. SMCC faculty, the META Education Director, and the BHS Advisory Board began creating curriculum and designing a terminal certificate and degree program to allow program enrollees to begin working within a 2-year period.

(5c) BHS program responded to the needs of the community by creating community responsive programming and developing collaborative ventures with other higher education organizations and education sectors. In fall 2003, in response to the workforce demands in the community, the Behavioral Health Sciences Program was approved by the MCCC Governing Board allowing SMCC to offer two certificates (Basic & Advanced Behavioral Health) and two Associates of Applied Science (AAS) Degrees (Recovery Counseling & BHS). In 2004, the State instituted new licensing laws for counselors and behavioral health technicians. In order to meet these requirements, and to update language, the program was modified in 2005 to include one additional course and to change the specialty tracks to meet workforce demands. The number of credits was increased to 18-hours to earn the Basic Certificate so it could be used for Pell Grants, which require at least an 18-credit program of study.

(5d) The BHS Program is a highly valued occupational program in the community, which serves a highly diverse student population from the East, Central, and West Valley communities. The only other similar program (which replicated the SMCC BHS Program in 2006) is located at Glendale Community College. SMCC has formed a partnership with Ottawa University, which accepts up to 90 BHS and general education credits from SMCC. A few students have also transferred into ASU's Interdisciplinary Studies and Social Work Programs.

For more details about this program see the Resource Room for the Phase I Annual Review Report, APRASL Report 2008, letters of support, and BHS Program files.

Early Childhood Education Program

The primary goal of the *Early Childhood Education* program, which includes SMCC's Montessori program, is to raise the quality of teaching in preschools. Other goals are to provide a curriculum that leads to a Certificate of Completion in Early Childhood, then to an Associates degree in Applied Science, and to provide credits that articulate with four-year university Education degree requirements. The program strives to provide college training that is affordable and is easily assessable to those living in SMCC's communities.

(5a) SMCC's program closely follows the National Head Start Guidelines and the Arizona Department of Education Early Learning Standards.

In order for the Montessori program to receive official recognition, a self-study report was written and full accreditation was granted under the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (M.A.C.T.E.) November 6, 2007. The program is also recognized with the American Montessori Society (AMS). SMCC's Early Childhood Education program is the only M.A.C.T.E. accredited, A.M.S. affiliated program in a post-secondary institution in Arizona and in the four-corner states.

The coordinator of this program tracks the progress of 130 Department of Economic Security students for grant monies provided by Central Arizona College (CAC), Pell grant, and tribal funds. The majority of students (70-90%) receive federal and state grants to attend school.

Students in both the Montessori and Early Childhood programs are assessed and counseled as to how to improve their skills. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with Learning Assistance Center tutors for assistance.

Program changes that were made as a result of assessment and evaluation include:

- Montessori outlines were revised to improve student learning
- Revisions in Early Childhood course content were made to meet students' needs
- Meaningful videos and speakers were added
- Montessori class meeting times were reformatted (spacing classes out over two months so that students had more time to assimilate course content)

(5b) SMCC's Early Childhood Education Program is fully committed to serving the educational and professional needs of its constituents. Head Start, state funded preschools, as well as a number of private preschools have raised their standards to require an A.A.S. in Early Childhood and or the national Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential. SMCC provides the required courses for the CDA.

The program works closely with Head Start administrators and preschool directors to offer courses both on campus and for cohorts at off-campus facilities. Since Montessori Schools in Maricopa County need Montessori certified teachers and teacher assistants, SMCC is filling a great need. SMCC's program is the only institution in the state that offers both college credit and Montessori certification. The college also wrote additional Montessori curriculum as the foundation of an Elementary Teacher Certification Program opened in the summer of 2008.

(5c) In Fall 2003, the program received an Arizona Department of Economic Security grant that paid for students' enrollment in classes (It started as a three credit award and then increased to six credits). This benefit greatly increased the number of students participating in the program. Since Montessori Private Certification Programs are very expensive, SMCC is now able to provide an accredited certification program that is affordable to a very diverse population that has seldom had the



opportunity to become Montessori Certified.

Table 7.1:

5 Year Cumulative Head Count and FTSE by Ethnicity Fall 2002 - Fall 2006

	Head Count	FTSE
Native American	24	5.6
Asian	9	2.5
African-American	123	31.4
Hispanic	268	63.9
Other	11	2
Unknown	33	6.5
White	179	35.5
Total	647	147.4

(5d) Growing from 12 students in the fall of 2005 to 64 students in the fall of 2007, the program grew in spite of a decline in total enrollment during this time at SMCC. In addition to this growth as evidence of being valued, the Early Childhood students continually express their gratitude for our program. The following are frequent comments from students:

- “After taking courses here, I’ve been promoted from an assistant to lead teacher.”
- “My professors have given me so many new ideas and strategies to use in my classroom.”
- “The DES grant has enabled me to continue my education. I could not afford it otherwise.”
- “The whole department is so supportive and personally helpful. If I have a problem, I can go for help.”

Montessori students are also most appreciative of the current program in which they receive both Montessori certification and college credit. Students who are enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program, as part of their A.A.S. degree program, take the general education core curriculum which increases enrollment in courses such as reading, English, mathematics and science, and other elective courses at SMCC.

Local Headstart and other childhood development programs are now requiring their employees to take Early Childhood courses from SMCC. The Early Childhood Education program adds a strong occupational component to SMCC’s academic programming as well as being a gateway to additional academic programs for students. Thirty-five students have graduated with an AAS. Thirty students formed a cohort at NAU to work toward a BAS degree and state certification. Ten have received the national Child Development Associate (CDA) certification. Twenty others are currently completing the required CDA coursework.

Workforce Development Summary

South Mountain Community College offers multiple programs in direct response to the needs of local businesses and schools. SMCC recognizes the need to collaborate closely with area partners and has created several advisory boards while also streamlining business processes to ensure maximum efficiency. The development of a Workforce Development Model that allows for soliciting information and analyzing the feedback for potential programs has been a great addition to college work force development efforts.

SMCC is proud of these three programs because of the collaboration required to develop and maintain their success as well as of their capacity to meet the needs of the SMCC community. All three programs have served to fill a vacancy of critical positions in the health care fields and in education.

Strengths

- Increased awareness and involvement from internal and external constituents.
- The inclusion of Workforce Development as a priority in college strategic planning.
- Multiple partnerships with large external organizations have been created and successfully maintained.
- College workforce development activities are sought after and valued by community leaders.

Challenges

- The need to assess/evaluate workforce development efforts based on quantitative data, including the compilation, interpretation, and organization of both internal and external constituent feedback.
- The programmatic needs under Workforce Development often are in need of more permanent funding because many of the programs are supported through grants.
- Recruitment of a greater number of instructors who can teach courses requested by businesses
- The expansion of occupational-related disciplines that can be successfully offered to local businesses



College Student Services

SMCC Student Services umbrellas many services provided to its students. From the time a student decides to enroll at SMCC, more than 20 service departments, resources, and student support programs become available to that student. College assessment for course placement, advisement, career and personal counseling, and assistance with financial aid are all part of a college's traditional Student Services offerings. But at SMCC, students can also benefit from child care services, a fitness center and wellness program, disability resources, veterans services, library and free tutoring services. For the student who wishes to be more involved in college life, the college also provides Student Life and Leadership and Athletic opportunities.

The five services and programs presented in this section are evidence that South Mountain Community College "identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value."

Child Care Services

The mission of the *SMCC Child Care Program* is to provide a high quality, developmentally appropriate childcare program and family resources that meet and support the diverse needs of South Mountain Community College students and employees. The SMCC Child Care program provides on-campus childcare services for children of students, faculty, and staff at South Mountain Community College. The Center is open spring and fall semesters Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the days the college is open.

(5a) SMCC Child Care program learns about the needs of its community by assessing its participants. Families at the SMCC Child Care program have an opportunity to give input on how the program is administered. At the end of each spring semester, all families are invited to participate in an annual program evaluation by completing and returning a family survey. The feedback from the survey drives the planning for the next year's programs.

(5b) The SMCC Child Care program is licensed by the Arizona Department of Health Child Care Licensing Division. According to this license, the SMCC Child Care program may serve a maximum to 34 children at any given time. The families/students served are from various communities within Maricopa County. In order to maintain the program's license, the Child Care Center is currently staffed with an Early Childhood Supervisor, Clerk/Typist, and two full time teachers. In addition to the full time staff, the Child Care Program utilizes substitute teachers and four college work study students.

SMCC's Early Childhood Center was also one of the first early childhood programs in the country to earn accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) under its new set of standards. The center went through an extensive self-study process measuring the program and its services against 10 NAEYC standards and more than 400 related criteria. This accreditation assures families in our community that their children enrolled in our program are getting the best

care and early learning experiences possible.

(5c) The SMCC Child Care program serves children between the ages of three and seven years of age. The center is open and available during high peak class times at SMCC, Monday through Friday. At the beginning of each semester the child care program holds a parent orientation to introduce new families to the program and to update existing families with any new information. If the need arises families can be referred out community assistance organizations.

SMCC, in partnership with Roosevelt School District under a C-campus Grant, has provided evening child care for parents of the District to enroll in classes to further their education and job skills. Students who need financial assistance with paying child care fees are referred to the Arizona Department of Economic Security for help. SMCC Child Care program is contracted under the Department of Health Services to provide subsidy assistance to those who qualify.

(5d) Students and staff value services provided by the Child Care Center. This is evident in that the program remains full semester after semester. Teachers work with children and families to ensure open communication and they take pride in the classroom environment. This is made evident by positive the teacher/child interactions. Families appreciate and seek out SMCC's highly rated NAEYC-accredited programs for their children.

Learning Assistance Center

The mission of the SMCC *Learning Assistance Center* (LAC) is to support academic learning by providing services and resources to reinforce, support and supplement classroom instruction; to improve student learning efficiency and effectiveness; to create learning communities; and to provide learning resources to students, faculty and the community. The LAC's ultimate goal is to support the student in becoming an independent learner.

(5a) As students come into the center requesting assistance, they are required to log onto the Tutor-Trac system to determine what type of services are needed. The information is then processed to determine which subjects are having large volumes of students requesting tutoring for those various subject areas. The LAC matches the students' needs with the tutoring capabilities and utilizes faculty input to meet future needs. The LAC builds to capacity based on faculty and student feedback.

(5b) The Learning Assistance Center, which offers free tutoring to all SMCC students, creates and maintains a strong capacity in terms of budget and academic support services to fully engage our campus community. Services range from Study Skills Assistance; Textbook Resources; Tutorial Videos; Tutorial Software; Study Guides; Supplemental Guides; Supplemental Materials and Math Websites to internet access and GED tutoring. Faculty and staff also make referrals to the center. The LAC provides free tutoring services to the ACE program (Achieving a College Education) and to the AAEC Charter High School. In addition, the center also offers lab services and tutorial software to community



members with a library card.

(5c) The LAC continues to broaden the offerings of the center by hiring tutors with diverse backgrounds and academic skills. SMCC's commitment to providing quality services to its students has led to the center's current participation in a national tutor certification program. Through this program, tutors can improve their content tutoring skills and become certified as a nationally qualified tutor. Training modules are facilitated by learning center directors and interested, qualified faculty.

SMCC faculty communicate with the center regarding which courses have low retention rates, or those with students who need extra assistance in order to pass the course. Each semester LAC staff completes an inventory to review course curricula, textbooks, review course study guides and video tutorials as a way of better serving students. Additionally, should resources or tutors not be available in a certain course, the center coordinates student study groups, purchases video tutorials, and works with faculty to develop or provide solution manuals for those subjects.

(5d) Students are given the opportunity to evaluate the services rendered by the LAC on TutorTrac. Comments are followed up by the Director. Should a tutor not perform effectively, the Director will observe the tutor in action in order to develop a plan for improvement. In addition, as students apply for graduation, SMCC provides students with an exit survey to determine their satisfaction of services received. That data is then submitted to the various departments for review in order to improve and make adjustments. SMCC also collects data from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) report. The report provides critical data that allows the LAC to review the feedback given to the college.

Disability Resources and Services

The mission of the *Disability Resources and Services Office* (DRS) at South Mountain Community College is to provide qualified, self-identifying students with disabilities equal access to a quality post-secondary educational experience by administering reasonable accommodations as needed; foster and establish linkages, disability awareness, and collaboration between students, faculty, staff, and other college and community resources; and develop potential campus and community resources that will provide opportunities to strengthen student academic and vocational success.

(5a) The Disability Resources and Services Office (DRS) at South Mountain Community College evaluates student applicant documentation provided by a medical professional in order to decide how to best serve the student. Under Maricopa County Community College District guidelines, each applicant with a disability must meet the MCCC-Admissions requirements, or be enrolled, and must provide required documentation by verifying the nature and extent of the disability prior to receiving any accommodation.

The disability services office is responsible for evaluating, documenting and determining accommoda-

tion eligibility. The DRS Manager meets with each individual student to discuss his or her academic expectations and needs. The DRS Manager also works closely with faculty to implement classroom accommodations.

(5b) The DRS office is fully committed to, and has the capacity for serving, the college and community with a $\frac{3}{4}$ time Director position and part time temporary assistant. The college budget resources also sufficiently meet the needs of program. Request for information by area schools are met with SMCC DRS workshops and presentations on services and proper documentation for services at the post secondary level.

(5c) Although any student may register for fewer than 12 credit hours, a student with a disability may request a reduced academic load as a reasonable and appropriate accommodation. A college DRS professional may certify that a student who is afforded a reduced academic load as an accommodation for a disability shall nevertheless be deemed a full-time student. Students return each semester and correspond with the DRS Manager. The Director follows up by meeting with students and checks grades at the end of each semester. Adjustments or changes to accommodations are considered at that time. This is done through policy and procedures related to reasonable accommodations as they are done at the post-secondary level. Accommodations are done with consistency throughout MCCC colleges.

(5d) In 2007-08 DRS assisted 108 SMCC students with disability accommodations. DRS also provided service to 19 area high school students and received a total of 392 visits. Accommodations included: note takers, enlarged text, interpreting services, testing services including scribing and readers, special seating, e-text books, and in house training on adaptive software and study skills assistance. Faculty and staff have integrated DRS information into syllabi. Faculty have made referrals and work with the DRS in open communication and support in all areas of student services. Services implementation is conducted in collaboration with DRS and other areas, such as the Learning Center and the Computer Commons.

Athletics

For over 25 years South Mountain Community College has been supporting and serving its community through *Athletics*. The current program staff includes two former SMCC student athletes who went on to complete their degrees and are now full-time coaches within the department. Each year, nine NJCAA affiliated teams, consisting of more than 150 student athletes, continue to prepare for their futures.

(5a) SMCC Athletics learns from the constituencies it serves in the following ways: open door policies, freshman life-skills classes, and the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) program. An “open door” policy is understood by all student athletes. All have the ability to walk into the Director’s or coach’s office and discuss any needs or issues they may have that day. A three-credit Life Skills class was



also developed in collaboration between Counseling and Athletics, to address the needs of student athletes outside the athletic arena. Faculty and the coaching staff, based on trends in student athlete behavior, developed the course, which targeted decision-making skills, male-female communications, birth control and safe sex, relationships, career opportunities, and an overview of college wide services. This class has a dynamic instructor that relates well to student athletes and also encourages guest speakers on a variety of topics. One recent topic was “NCAA eligibility requirements for transfer students.”

The Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) program was developed five years ago by the Director of Athletics after seeing a need for student athletes to connect more with faculty and vice versa. The role of the faculty member is as a student athlete advocate, offering a connection to other faculty members to improve communications and resolve potential areas of conflict should they occur. Faculty volunteer to be a specific team FAR; the coach then introduces the team to the faculty member and a conversation begins.

(5b) In 2003 the college felt strongly that a full-time Director of Athletics was needed to successfully support student athletes and that the faculty nine month model was no longer meeting the needs of the department. Since then a full-time Athletic Trainer has been added, an office assistant has been expanded from a 9 to a 12 month position and two full-time coaches have been added. Over the last three years improvements have been made to the softball and soccer fields, and gym; offices and painting of facilities. All funding is provided through District, College and Athletic department budgets.

In order to engage with the internal and external communities, the Athletic Department also has created a new athletic logo and updated the [Athletics website](#). All Athletic Department forms are also included on the site and can be completed and emailed back to a specific office. This year, podcasting will be introduced to the college and surrounding communities. The Athletic pod cast “Cougar Nation” will include up to date results of contests, interviews with players, coaches, and a community questions and answer session.

(5c) The SMCC Athletics department responds to its community and student athletes’ needs by connecting with parents, providing personalized academic advising, and by regularly tracking a student’s academic progress. The Cougar Kick-Off parent/student athlete orientation was created, an interest form for community members is available on line from the Athletics web page, and athletic scholarships are awarded to in-state students, of which 90% are from community area high schools.

The academic advisor is a member of the Athletics department to better assist student athletes with class scheduling, tutoring resources, academic tracking and transfer information and follow up. Creation of an electronic academic tracking system for Athletics is being created in conjunction with College Technology Services and Athletics.

(5d) SMCC Athletics has a strong community service component and this service is a requirement of every member of every team in the department. Each year, teams are allowed to select an activity that they feel will serve the community needs as well as enhance team members' understanding of service to others. Last spring the Athletic department was named Community Service group of the year at the Student Life awards banquet for its service to St. Mary's Food Bank. In addition, coaches offered free sport camps, attended banquets, and marched in local parades.

Student athletes also volunteer each semester the first week of classes to assist new students looking for a classroom or building, answering questions about campus life or how to find the book store. Athletes are valued for what they do in the classroom. In fall 2008, the women's volleyball team was the top Academic Team of the Year in the nation with a 3.78 GPA and the men's baseball team was runner up with a 3.50 GPA. The Athletic Department also completes the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA) each year.

TRIO-STEP

SMCC's first TRIO program, Students Transfer with Educational Preparation (STEP) program was established at SMCC in 2005 through a TRIO-Student Support Services grant from the Department of Education. SMCC was awarded \$1.1 million for five years to provide 160 students with academic support services. The STEP program offers qualifying participants a learning community and academic support system that will assist students in mastering their college transitions. The primary goal of STEP is to assist students in transferring to 4-year institutions. By increasing higher education access and opportunities, STEP aims to increase retention and graduation rates of community college students and prepares them to make a smooth transition.

(5a) The primary target market for STEP is at-risk students who might otherwise not succeed in the college or university environment. To qualify for STEP, participants must be first-generation college students (neither parent has a Bachelor's degree), low income, or disabled. Participants must be full-time students, committed to transferring to a 4-year institution and are required to maintain a 2.5 GPA or better.

In 2003-2004, SMCC administrators were concerned about the increasing number of students who were testing into remedial courses both in English and math. In addition, retention rates and graduation rates were extremely low. According to the 2005 Strategic Enrollment Management committee retention reports, only 31% of students were retained and 28% of undecided students were retained. As referenced in the *National Community College Benchmark Project: 2007 Maricopa District Aggregate Data*, only 21% completed a degree, certificate or transferred within three years (2003 GRS Cohort).

As a direct result of placement testing scores and program needs assessment surveys, the STEP program was established in order to increase the retention and graduation rates of South Mountain



Community College students. In addition, the program is designed to assist students with the transfer process of continuing their education and obtaining a Bachelor's degree at the university level. The STEP program also places an emphasis on supplemental math instruction along with math and English tutoring.

(5b) The Student Support Services TRIO grant is a partnership with the United States Department of Education, and is one which creates a strong capacity in terms of budget, grant aid and academic support services to fully engage our campus community. The US Department of Education awarded \$1.1 million to SMCC over five years to provide support services to low income and first generation college students. Last year \$14,575 in grant aid was awarded to STEP students who were Pell eligible. TRIO employs four staff members devoted to serve all TRIO-STEP students. From fall of 2006 to spring of 2008, the program logged over 1,215 hours of advising and tutoring.

(5c) The current TRIO grant has funding for 160 participants. As the program grows, the staff members will continue to provide services that will help students succeed in the classroom and transfer to colleges and universities. At the beginning of the program, marketing was conducted on campus to recruit eligible participants. Since then, students have been recruited by word of mouth, through classroom presentations, staff, and faculty and student referrals. In the 2005-2006 academic year, STEP had 22 graduates receiving 2-year degrees from SMCC and transferring to state or private universities.

By the 2007-2008 academic year, STEP had 36 graduates receiving 2-year degrees from SMCC and transferring to state or private universities. One STEP participant has graduated with a 4-year degree from Ottawa University. Two STEP participants graduated from NAU in the 2007-2008 academic year.

(5d) As first-generation college students, most STEP participants do not have the skills, information referents, or support systems that can lead to success in college. For most, college is a "big scary place." STEP provides a safe place with the support and needed structure to build those skills. In some cases it is a challenge for the STEP participants to move beyond the program - "getting the birds to leave the nest."

The current grant expires in 2010. In 2009, the TRIO program will be participating in a funding competition to renew and increase the grant. If successful, the new grant would continue the program and provide funding for 200 participants, up from the current 160.

As a result of the benefits and services participants receive, students are more prepared to transfer to the universities of their choice. Thus, counselors and recruiters from ASU, NAU and U of A appreciate how prepared students are when they transfer. Specific comments from students and faculty concerning the value of SMCC's STEP program can be located in the [Resource Room](#).

Student Services Summary

SMCC Student Enrollment Services and Student Development Services have a direct impact on students by creating a supportive and open atmosphere that encourages independence. Programs and staff are committed to open communications and collaboration between departments for the good of students and staff.

The staffs meet regularly within departments and as a student service group to stay updated and share ideas that may assist students as well as their specific department. This philosophy of cross-department communication ensures that all student service personnel can speak in one voice when serving students. All student services staff have a common goal: to support the development of the independent learner.

Strengths:

- Programs, services and staff are all committed to supporting the independent learner.
- Diversity of programs to support student
- Annual joint student services planning by all departments and inclusion in college strategic plan; departments are also in the process of creating and evaluating Student Learning Outcomes.
- Strong communication among SMCC Student Services programs

Challenges:

- Continuing to serve students well while adhering to increasing budget constraints.
- The development of creative solutions to these possible budget constraints.

Community Outreach

A point of pride for SMCC is its connection to the community. As the only institution of higher education serving the South Phoenix, Guadalupe, Ahwatukee, and Laveen communities, SMCC recognizes its responsibility to build and maintain community connections. This section highlights three programs that illustrate SMCC's commitment to community outreach: Dual Enrollment, SMCC's Honors Program, and the SMCC Storytelling Institute.

Dual Enrollment

South Mountain Community College has been involved in providing dual enrollment credit to service



area high school students, public, private and charter, for over 10 years. The college has made a strategic and concerted decision to emphasize this enrollment growth opportunity within the last year, which will also provide greater opportunity for local youth to avail themselves of college courses.

(5a) SMCC delivers dual enrollment courses to five charter/private high schools and seven public high schools within the SMCC service area. Dual enrollment staff is continuously conducting environmental scans with these school administrators and teachers regarding future dual enrollment opportunities. These pre-school year meetings are used to inform teachers and/or administrators of procedural changes and distribute registration materials. At the conclusion of the academic year, dual enrollment staff meets again with dual enrollment teachers to ascertain what was successful and where opportunities for improvement exist. These meetings have been very helpful in determining SMCC's response to high school and community requests.

(5b) An anticipated and strategic byproduct of participating in dual enrollment courses is strengthening the professional relationships among partner high school discipline teachers and their SMCC counterparts. Increasing communication among these faculty groups streamlines instruction among our partner high schools and SMCC divisions participating in dual enrollment, leading to greater probability of student matriculation from feeder high schools to SMCC.

Table 7.2:
Dual Enrollment Statistics 2002-2008

Academic Year	High School Partners	Sections	Dual Enrollment Students (Duplicated)	Dual Enrollment Credit Hours Generated	FTSE Generated
2002-2003	6	40	478	1,192	39.73
2003-2004	6	38	566	1,467	48.90
2004-2005	6	25	369	1,019	33.97
2005-2006	6	30	529	1,512	50.13
2006-2007	7	49	794	2,185	72.17
2007-2008	8	70	718	2,272	75.70

Aside from the students, other affected constituencies are SMCC faculty and instructional divisions. To support and promote the maintenance of instructional integrity within all dual enrollment courses, SMCC, along with other MCCC colleges, is an active participant in the MCCC Dual Enrollment Committee, a district level committee overseeing all aspects of all MCCC dual enrollment programs.

An SMCC Dual Enrollment Advisory Committee has also been convened to assist dual enrollment staff with the operation of the dual enrollment program. This operation includes the monitoring of the MCCC Dual Enrollment Quality Standards, approval of the SMCC dual enrollment processes, serving as a general SMCC dual enrollment policy making body, and advocating the program within the college.

The committee consists of four faculty, three being division chairs whose divisions offers dual enrollment courses, the other faculty member serving as a designee to a division chair; and dual enrollment staff. By supporting the expansion of dual enrollment sections, and actively participating in dual enrollment related oversight committees, SMCC faculty have shown great commitment to dual enrollment.

(5c) South Mountain Community College, along with all Maricopa Community Colleges offering dual enrollment courses, must reimburse participating high schools for the reasonable cost of instructional services, facilities, and materials used in the MCCC/S MCC courses offered on a dual enrollment basis. As the number of courses, students and credit hours generated has increased, the dollar amount which SMCC must pay to participating high schools has increased. The college has responded to its constituents by continuously increasing its budget to meet present and future dual enrollment expenditures from \$40,853 in FY 02-03 to \$88,913 in FY 06-07.

A dual enrollment web page was created to give access to dual enrollment registration material and information for students, parents, high school teachers, and administrators <<http://help.southmountaincc.edu/ResourcesFor/HighSchoolStudents/DualEnrollment.htm>>.

Because of the dual enrollment relationships SMCC has with the three of our high schools, the college has been able to partner in a USDA Bioscience Engagement Track Grant promoting Bioscience to minority urban students. The grant also includes training the high school teachers who will be teaching the entry level Bioscience courses on a dual enrollment basis. This would have been much more difficult without the relationships which have been built and fostered.

(5d) As the SMCC dual enrollment program has become more formalized and transparent, high school dual enrollment teachers have made program recommendation, which have led to:

- Dual enrollment teachers invited to SMCC adjunct faculty orientations every semester.
- Collaboratively created schedules of when and how the program assesses and registers high school students into dual enrollment courses
- Collaboratively revising how textbooks are purchased and distributed to participating students
- The creation of a dual enrollment web site, in response to high schools wanting greater availability to access information online.

There is an increasing sense of comfort and confidence in participating with and growing dual enrollment among the internal dual enrollment constituents (division chairs, division secretaries, Records & Registration staff, Cashiers Office staff, and instructional administration) as evidence by increased communication between all involved in dual enrollment efforts.



SMCC Honors Program

The Maricopa County Community College District Honors Program was founded in FY 1981-1982, with eventual college Honors Programs established on each of the campuses. This program is a response to community requests to enhance educational opportunities for students, to provide a climate of academic excellence both in the colleges and in the surrounding community, and to recognize and reward talented students and faculty.

High school graduates in the top 15% of their graduating class from NCA accredited Maricopa County high schools and continuing college students with high grade point averages are eligible for Honors scholarships. Honors students must meet continuing eligibility requirements to maintain their scholarships. In addition to academics, at SMCC, Honors students are encouraged to join Phi Theta Kappa and to participate in co-curricular activities such as service learning and leadership training.

(5a) The Honors Program at South Mountain Community College awards Presidents' scholarships and fee waivers to students for high academic achievement. As a result of input from campus Honors programs, incoming students are also eligible to qualify for Presidents' scholarships by high placement scores. This policy was instituted district-wide in response to the needs of home schooled and charter school students whose schools do not meet the accreditation requirement.

Students enrolled in the Honors Program participate in an Honors-only seminar course, "Honors Forum" (HUM190), and through the use of Honors contracts; these are courses that are offered in every discipline. The Honors Forum is based on an annual study topic developed in conjunction with Phi Theta Kappa. Contract courses are adjusted each semester to meet students' changing needs as well as faculty schedules. All of these courses are offered in both face-to-face and hybrid formats to accommodate the needs of students. Additional information can be located in the [Virtual Resource Room: 2004-2006 Honors Program Review](#).

(5b) The commitment of MCCC and SMCC for the Honors Program is evidenced by reassigned time for two faculty co-coordinators and the employment of two part-time office coordinators and a work study student, as well as a generous budget. In 2005, after a district-wide budget review, the SMCC Honors budget was increased from \$17,000 to \$47,000 per year, based on a campus increase of 307% from AY 99-00 to AY 03-04. The MCCC budget funds Presidents' scholarships, which pay 15 credits of in-county tuition and the registration fee for students in the top 15% of their high school graduating class, as well as fee waivers (smaller scholarships up to \$275) for continuing students with a high grade point average.

The SMCC Honors Program funds faculty and student travel to a variety of regional and international Phi Theta Kappa conferences. The program also supports Honors faculty travel to National Collegiate Honors Conference events. In addition, since 2001, the program has supported the successful candidacies of eight Phi Theta Kappa members as officers of the Arizona Region.

(5c) Honors students at SMCC form a community of academically motivated, service oriented students with leadership potential who participate in challenging and enriching educational experiences. The purpose of the Honors program is to foster greater depth of thought in reading, writing, and mathematical or scientific inquiry through personal interaction with Honors faculty. Over 200 students participate in the program each year.

(5d) Students and faculty value the service provided by the SMCC Honors Program which is evident by its tremendous growth in the past few years.

Honors and Phi Theta Kappa graduates recognize the efforts of SMCC personnel through a spring Faculty-Staff recognition dinner. In addition, Honors students are acknowledged at the SMCC Student Awards ceremony in April. Presentations of the Chancellor's and Foundation scholarships are made at a district-wide reception in the spring. Campus All-AZ Academic Team recipients are honored at a state-wide luncheon held at Mesa Community College each February. Phi Theta Kappa members are nominated and frequently receive regional and international recognition at conferences. The efforts of the chapter in programming have resulted in Five Star status (the highest award possible) every year since AY 90-91.

SMCC Storytelling Institute

The *Storytelling Institute* was created at SMCC in 1995 and continues today as an award-winning program that continually reaches out to the community. The Storytelling Program vision is education that cultivates the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual growth of each student. The mission of this program is to teach and practice the art of storytelling in order to educate hearts and minds, and develop community.

There are four Foundational Goals that continue to be pursued: (1) to enhance teaching and learning through storytelling; (2) to recruit and train people who are interested in becoming storytellers; (3) to develop community interest in storytelling as a means for connecting and bridge building in the South Mountain Community; and (4) to provide opportunities for professional and personal growth through storytelling.

(5a) The Storytelling Institute continually evaluates its offerings in response to student participation and community feedback. Currently the program offers a 30-credit Academic Certificate in Storytelling. Students can choose from fourteen 3-credit courses and eleven 1-credit courses offered in the Academic Certificate Program in Storytelling. Some of these courses are offered once a year or every other year. Three of the courses have pre-requisites: Storytelling II, Multicultural Folktales II, and Storytelling Practicum. Many students take a single class to fulfill a personal or career goal. Students who complete the certificate represent a small proportion of total students taking storytelling classes. Certificate completers usually intend to become professional storytellers or integrate storytelling into their professions to a high degree.



The Academic Certificate Program in Storytelling is small but successful. In the past four years, fifteen students have received their Academic Certificate in Storytelling. One has a Doctorate in Psychology, six have Master's Degrees, two have Bachelor's Degrees, one received an Associate's Degree at the same time, and five have course work but no degrees beyond high school.

(5b) The SMCC faculty and administration have demonstrated support and commitment to the Storytelling Institute and the Academic Certificate Program in Storytelling. The college institutionalized the academic side of the Storytelling Institute by providing a \$5,000 yearly budget line. The college staffing committee and the President agreed to change two faculty lines: one from English to Humanities and Storytelling; one from English/Anthropology to English and Storytelling. This support shows the commitment of college administration to the Academic Certificate Program in Storytelling for the future. When current residential faculties in the Storytelling Institute retire, these positions will continue.

The college exhibits additional commitment by supporting the position of the institute "Director." This faculty position is currently allocated six hours reassign time each fall and spring semester for 1) coordinating and producing the institutes many storytelling events, 2) for scheduling and staffing all storytelling classes at the college, and 3) for acting as the central contact for community members who call or email wanting storytellers for their events.

(5c) The Storytelling Institute demonstrates its responsiveness to the community by offering storytelling classes at SMCC's Guadalupe Center, Ahwatukee Foothills Center, and Laveen; Univision and Phoenix Art Museum; and a hybrid online course for mental health professionals. In response to requests from the Ahwatukee community, the Storytelling Institute also instituted a monthly series of storytelling at The CoffeeBuzz, a small coffee shop in Ahwatukee.

(5d) The college supports the Storytelling Institute and the Academic Certificate Program in Storytelling by allowing faculty, staff, and facilities to be used for its courses and events. The President and Vice-President of Academic Affairs welcome, in person, storytelling audiences at events held in the SMCC Performance Hall.

From its inception, the Mesa Storytelling Festival organizers have partnered with the Storytelling Institute to produce the Mesa Storytelling Festival. SMCC's Institute has shared its 1,000 person mailing database and its faculty have contributed countless hours of assistance with the production of the festival. After the 2007 festival, the Mesa Arts Center agreed to pay for 3 load hours of faculty time each semester for help from the Institute.

Community Outreach Summary

The three programs highlighted here represent key examples of SMCC's ability to identify and respond to the needs of those it serves, but they are by no means the only examples of the college's efforts to reach out to its communities. Staying true to its roots of authentic, meaningful community engagement and service is embedded in the SMCC mission and values statements.

Strengths:

- SMCC has built strong relationships with its communities through programs such as Honors, Dual Enrollment, and Storytelling.
- Many college faculty and staff have established good personal and professional linkages to service area communities.
- SMCC communities view the college as a resource and a partner.

Challenges:

- SMCC could improve its evaluation and assessment of community satisfaction with outreach and services.
- More of SMCC's faculty and staff could be more aware of the many different ways the college serves its communities.

Criterion 5 Summary

The relationship between the college and its communities has been a naturally symbiotic one from the inception of the college. For the nearly 30 years of its participation in its surrounding communities, South Mountain Community College has engaged with, and provided excellent services and programs for, its service area constituencies. Through workforce development efforts, the college collaborates with its partners to provide Maricopa county with much-needed bilingual nursing employees, trained behavioral health professionals, and Early Childhood Education professionals.

Services provided by SMCC Student Services exemplify the Higher Learning Commission's standard for learning from its constituents and responding to them based on that assessment. SMCC Student Services is actively engaged in all levels of college strategic planning, and is dedicated to developing each student as an independent learner.



College community outreach efforts have resulted in increased participation in Dual Enrollment courses, a continually evolving Honors Program, and an extremely successful Storytelling Institute. The college continues to improve and refine its recruitment efforts as well.

The community relationships and connections built by the college are carefully maintained, and have resulted in long-term positive perceptions of the college's presence in its communities. The college communities value its efforts through continued participation in the programs the college offers, and by continuing to be involved in the planning and development of additional programs and services.

Additionally, SMCC is viewed by its communities as a resource, a gathering place, and cornerstone of learning, service, engagement, and community connections. A list of the many community activities and events at all SMCC locations can be viewed at [Event Calendar](#). We have always been, and continue to be, a source of pride within our community.



SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Chapter 8

Federal Compliance

INTRODUCTION

South Mountain Community College follows all federal and state legal and financial requirements and has completed all components of a self-study to maintain accreditation status with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association.

The purpose of this chapter to is document evidence of federal compliance as requested by the Higher Learning Commission's Handbook of Accreditation.

Credits and Program Length

SMCC follows all guidelines and policies as established by the MCCCCD Governing Board.

SMCC uses a semester system that consists of a fall and spring semester; each semester is 16-weeks in length. In addition there is a summer session consisting of either two four- or five-week sessions or one eight-week session. The total instruction time in either of the summer session options is equivalent to a full fall or spring semester. Also, in 2006-2007, SMCC began offering a limited number of classes during the winter break ("Holiday Express"). These classes were quite successful and the format was repeated in both FY 2007-2008 and FY 2008-2009.

SMCC determines a course load by the amount of time required to teach the MCCCDC competencies. Each credit hour assigned to a course is the equivalent of a 50-minute period. A standard 3-credit hour class will meet for a total of 2,400 minutes (50 minutes x 3-credit hours x 16 weeks).

Faculty members have been instrumental in developing hybrid classes to meet the needs of students and to make efficient use of classroom space. All hybrid classes follow the same requirements of traditional classes but allow for more flexibility in the arrangement of class hours for the student. A hybrid class is a mixture of face-to-face class time and online assignments and expectations.

Additionally, SMCC faculty have developed a smaller number of fully online courses which run for the duration of a semester and are designed to meet the same requirements and course competencies of traditional classes. Recently, SMCC began using the Quality Matters © rubric for design and certification of hybrid and online classes.

SMCC offers 29 associate and transfer degrees with requirements of 60-67 credit hours, as well as 23 certificates of completions (CCL) ranging from 11 – 42 credit hours, and one Academic Certificate in Storytelling for 30 credit hours. Each of these programs follows standard course requirements in accordance with established guidelines ([SMCC Catalog](#)).

Tuition

None of the degrees or certificates offered at SMCC requires a different tuition schedule from the general tuition rate of \$71 per credit hour for in-county residents with the exception of students interested in receiving private music lessons. The private lesson rate is determined by whether the student is a music major or a non-major. Non-music majors pay \$320 a semester for a half hour of weekly lessons while music majors do not pay for the first half hour of weekly lessons.

Tuition for SMCC is set by the Maricopa County Community College District Governing Board. Each student must identify their residency status as this status determines the rate per credit hour. In 2007, Arizona voters approved Proposition 300, which mandated that all students enrolling in a higher education course must show proof of US citizenship or the student will be considered an unclassified student (out-of-state /out-of-county) and will be charged a higher rate.

In 2007-2008 the tuition was \$65 per credit hour for in-county residents. The rate was increased for the 2008-2009 academic year to \$71 per credit hour for in-county residents. All rates consist of general tuition, fees, and surcharges.

Table 8.1

Status	General Tuition	Student Services Fees	Surcharges	Total
County Resident	\$69	\$2	\$0	\$71
County Resident – Audit Rate	\$69	\$2	\$25	\$96
Out-of-County Resident	\$69	\$2	TBD	TBD
Out-of-State Resident (7 or more credit hours)	\$69	\$2	\$215	\$286
Unclassified Student (6 or less credit hours)	\$69	\$2	\$25	\$96

MCCCD administrative regulations also stipulate that only students from Arizona counties that do not have a community college will be considered Out-of-County residents. The counties affected by this regulation include: Apache, Greenlee, and Santa Cruz.

In addition to the above referenced tuition fee schedule, many courses charge a course fee. The purpose of this fee is to purchase disposable supplies or to purchase necessary equipment for the learning environment. This fee varies from course to course and college to college; there are general guidelines which require fees to be used for the direct benefit of students in the course. All course fees must be approved by the MCCCD Governing Board ([MCCCD Governing Board](#)).

Financial Aid

SMCC complies with the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) by continuing to apply for Approval to Participate in Federal Student Financial Aid Programs every five years. The last application was satisfactorily completed and granted in January 2004, and will remain in effect through September 30, 2009. SMCC maintains the Eligibility and Certification Approval Report (ECAR) and the Program Participation Agreement (PPA) in the Financial Aid Office.

SMCC ceased participation in the student loan program in 1989 when the default rate was approximately 23 percent. The college then began to explore ways to better serve students, while developing programs to educate students on student loans and money management, and implementing a very stringent loan default prevention plan. In 2001, SMCC began disbursing loans with several requirements for students including on-line and in-person group counseling sessions, enrollment in the course Personal Money Management (CPD108), and an exit interview. As of summer 2008, the official student loan group default rate was 10 percent.

Distribution of all financial aid by ethnicity of students is shown in Table 8.2:

Table 8.2

Ethnicity	Grants	Loans	CWS	Scholarships	Total
Unknown	2			11	8
Native American	131	28	5	121	172
Asian	28	3	1	50	55
African American	380	98	9	327	510
Hispanic	669	111	17	737	995
White	184	45	2	214	297
Other	60	8		62	87
TOTAL	1454	293	34	1522	2124

Distribution of all available financial aid by type is shown in table 8.3:

Table 8.3

	Pell & Other Grants	Loans	CWS	Scholarships	Total
Amount	\$3,000,254	\$793,606	\$94,715	\$1,162,350	\$5,050,925
Recipients	1513	296	32	1732	3573

Campus Crime-Reporting

SMCC follows legal requirements by submitting all accounts of criminal activity. These statistics are reported on an annual basis early in the fall semester. This information is then updated on the college website and an informational brochure containing these statistics is made available to all students, faculty, staff, and community. The 2008 brochure is available in the Resource Room and the latest available data is located on our website ([Virtual Resource Room](#)).

In accordance with the Crime Awareness and Campus Safety Act of 1990, the following criminal incidents were reported for the most recent academic years:

Table 8.4

VIOLATIONS	04-05	05-06	06-07
Murder	0	0	0
Burglary of Buildings	3	2	2
Auto Theft	7	4	2
Aggravated Assault	2	2	2
Sex Offenses:			
Rape	0	0	0
Forcible Sex	0	0	0
Non-Forcible Sex	0	0	0
Robbery	0	0	0
Arrests	3	3	2
Liquor Violations	1	1	0
Drug Violations	2	1	1
Weapon Violations	2	1	1

Veteran Services

SMCC's Office of Registration and Records maintains all records for veteran students and reports annually to the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services, Veterans' Education and Training Approving Agency (VETAA). The Registration and Records office maintains timely reporting to the Veterans' Administration regarding a veteran's enrollment changes and/or any other information such as credit accepted in transfer towards the student's program of study.

Arizona Auditor General

Each year the Arizona State Auditor General's Office reviews data of full-time student equivalence (FTSE). FTSE is used to determine funding for state appropriations to the college and it is therefore imperative that our data values be accurate and timely. The data reported to both the District office and the Auditor General is based on enrollment on the 45th day of the semester. The Maricopa Community College District Office also submits a year-end report to the state for all colleges in our district.

Advertising and Recruitment Materials

The Marketing and Public Relations Department at South Mountain Community College creates and disseminates information about the college to assist current and potential students with learning more about SMCC, and with identifying areas of study that meet their interest. This department also creates content designed to help a variety of college departments meet their enrollment and communication goals.

All materials generated from within this office include accurate contact information for SMCC so that students are able to quickly locate an employee or department.

SMCC clearly identifies our association with the Higher Learning Commission on our website, and posts the correct URL for the Commission's web site and its local phone number ([SMCC Marketing Department](#)).

Federal Compliance Visits to Off-Campus Locations

The Higher Learning Commission defines an off-campus site as: "A location at which a student can complete 50% or more of a degree program." Based on this definition SMCC has no off-campus sites, SMCC does offer courses in three additional communities: Guadalupe, Ahwatukee, and Laveen. The community of Guadalupe, which is east of the main campus, is served by the Guadalupe Center. This location was recently expanded, which has allowed the Center to offer more courses to serve the students in the community.

The community of Ahwatukee is located south of South Mountain Park. Courses are offered in many locations throughout the community at community centers and nearby high schools. A recent move of central Ahwatukee operations from the Horizon Learning Center to a new location will allow for continued growth to serve the community of Ahwatukee. In 2007, SMCC purchased 6.7 acres in anticipation of a permanent building.

Laveen, west of the main campus, was once a rural agricultural community but one that has recently been developed to include new-home communities, businesses, several elementary schools and two high schools. Courses were first offered in this community in 2006, and are now offered at Betty Fairfax High School, various elementary schools, and community centers. In 2007, 40 acres near Fairfax High School were purchased in anticipation of a permanent SMCC location.

Professional Accreditation

SMCC is very proud to acknowledge the accreditation of its Montessori Program. The Montessori Early Childhood (2.5-6 years of age) Teacher Education Program was accredited by The Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) in December 2007. This is the only Montessori accredited program of its kind in Arizona. It is one of only three accredited Community College programs in the U.S. with AMS (American Montessori Society) affiliation. Our affiliation with AMS was also granted in December 2007. The accreditation and affiliation were accomplished over four and a half years. It took a self-study report and an on-site visit by three MACTE officials. Our students may now receive a nationally recognized certificate so that they can teach in private Montessori schools throughout the United States. All documentation on accreditation reports is available in the [Virtual Resource Room](#).

Institutional Records of Student Complaints

SMCC complies with the requirements of the Higher Learning Commission by documenting all non-trivial complaints brought forward by students, whether academic or non-academic.

While most academic complaints are handled either by the faculty member involved or by the respective Division Chair, those that cannot be handled at that level are brought forward to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. At this level SMCC follows all regulation policies for student complaints as established by the MCCCCD Governing Board. Academic complaints are covered under Administrative Regulation 2.3.5 which states “A student who feels that he or she has been treated unfairly or unjustly by a faculty member with regard to an academic process such as grading, testing, or assignments, has the right to appeal according to the approved procedures. The appeal process for grades expires one year from the date the grade was issued.” This process is a four-step process that follows a specific timeline ([MCCCCD Governing Board Instructional Grievance Process](#)).

All non-trivial, non-academic, complaints will be handled by the Vice President of Student Services. MCCCCD Administrative Regulations 2.3.12 states that “A student who feels that he or she has been treated unfairly or unjustly by any employee with regard to a non-instructional process such as a student or administrative services has the right to file a formal and written complaint according to the approved procedures.” This grievance process is a five step process that follows a specific timeline ([MCCCCD Governing Board Non-Instructional Grievance Process](#)).

A record of all non-trivial academic and non-academic complaints can be found with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Vice President of Student Affairs.



SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Chapter 9

Conclusion and Request for Continued Accreditation

South Mountain Community College has been engaged in its Higher Learning Commission Self-Study process over the last two years, a process that was both inclusive and thorough. Participation in this study was college-wide and included numerous opportunities for input from the college community and its constituencies. The goals of the self-study, generated early in the process by the Project Manager group, were largely focused on 1) improving cross-college awareness of strengths and challenges, and 2) unifying the college through self-study inclusiveness and improved college-wide communication. Through multiple faculty-staff development programs designed to communicate with and include faculty and staff, and through the process of the self-study itself, these two main goals have been achieved. The stated goal of “improved academic assessment and rigor” has been addressed through the college’s application and acceptance to the HLC Assessment Academy, and “a clear plan for the college’s future” is quickly emerging through more clearly aligned college-wide planning processes.

This self-study report and the supporting materials demonstrate that SMCC meets each of the five criteria for accreditation set by the North Central Association Higher Learning Commission (HLC). In addition to providing sufficient evidence of the college’s adherence to its stated mission; its preparation for

the future through effective and thorough planning processes and sound resource management; its commitment to quality in teaching and learning and to modeling/valuing lifelong learning; and its capacity and commitment for engaging and serving its constituents and communities, the college has also recognized clear evidence of the four ***HLC cross-cutting themes*** inherent in a highly successful educational organization:

Future Oriented

SMCC engages in thorough long and short-term planning of fiscal resource use, technology implementation, human resource use, and enrollment management. These planning processes, as well as the college priorities and goals that are developed, are directly connected to the college mission, a mission that specifically states the college will prepare students for their many futures. The college has also proven itself flexible enough to adapt quickly to current economic and environmental trends in its service area while still maintaining its long-term vision of growth and commitment to its diverse communities. SMCC is committed to providing its students with the very best in technological services. These services provide students with the technological tools necessary for their future successes.

Learning Focused

SMCC has long been an organization focused on providing university transfer and life-long learning skills to its students. Though the areas of student learning assessment and strong scholarship (academic rigor) are areas in need of improvement, concrete plans and current actions are taking place to fully meet the academic needs of its students. General Education Outcomes are being developed to more effectively assess student learning; the college Developmental Education Program is clarifying both its purpose and those essential skills necessary to provide success for its developmental students; and the APRASL Program Review process continues to be refined. The use of data as the basis for improvement has become more institutionalized during the self-study process. Additionally, the college does much to foster and create the capacity for life-long learning of its faculty, staff, and students.

Connected

SMCC, through the specific components of its vision, mission, and values statements, strives specifically to serve the “common good” of the greater society. Maintaining strong ties and open two-way communication with all of its communities is foundational to college operations. Multiple collaborations with state universities, local school districts and industries are evidence that the college values connectedness, and the college’s presence on many local “village” planning boards provides the

college with important community feedback. SMCC is perceived as an integral part of each of the communities it serves, and SMCC students connect at the local, metropolitan, state and national levels through volunteerism, academic efforts, and Student Life and Leadership organizations and affiliations. Though external communication is stronger than it has ever been, connections internal to the college are still evolving. This self-study process has done much to improve overall college connect- edness.

Distinctive

Among the ten colleges of MCCC, SMCC is distinctive in three significant ways:

- its clarity of mission,
- its valuing of the diversity of all of its constituents, and
- its ability to maintain its focus and integrity even as it adapts to the rapidly changing environment of its service area.

Though the wording of the SMCC mission has been clarified over the last ten years, the heart of the college's mission has always been to provide an effective link to the university experience and to serve, in a compassionate way, all of the citizens of its communities. This attitude of inclusiveness and respect for its constituencies has fostered the amazing diversity found at "South". Faculty, staff, and students represent many cultures, and evidence of the college's stated values can be found throughout the college environments. Even in these times of significant economic and service area challenges, the college has remained focused on its mission. The use of clear college priorities and goals as the base of all strategic planning has kept the college thriving in tough economic times. The current self-study has inspired the college to be more reflective and to re-commit to improving its programs and services around the motto "Students First."

Request for Accreditation

South Mountain Community College has demonstrated a clear commitment to its mission: "quality higher education for our diverse community . . . a caring teaching and learning environment that fos- ters student development and supports productive citizenship in an increasingly global and techno- logical society." The college respectfully requests ten-year, continued accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.



SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

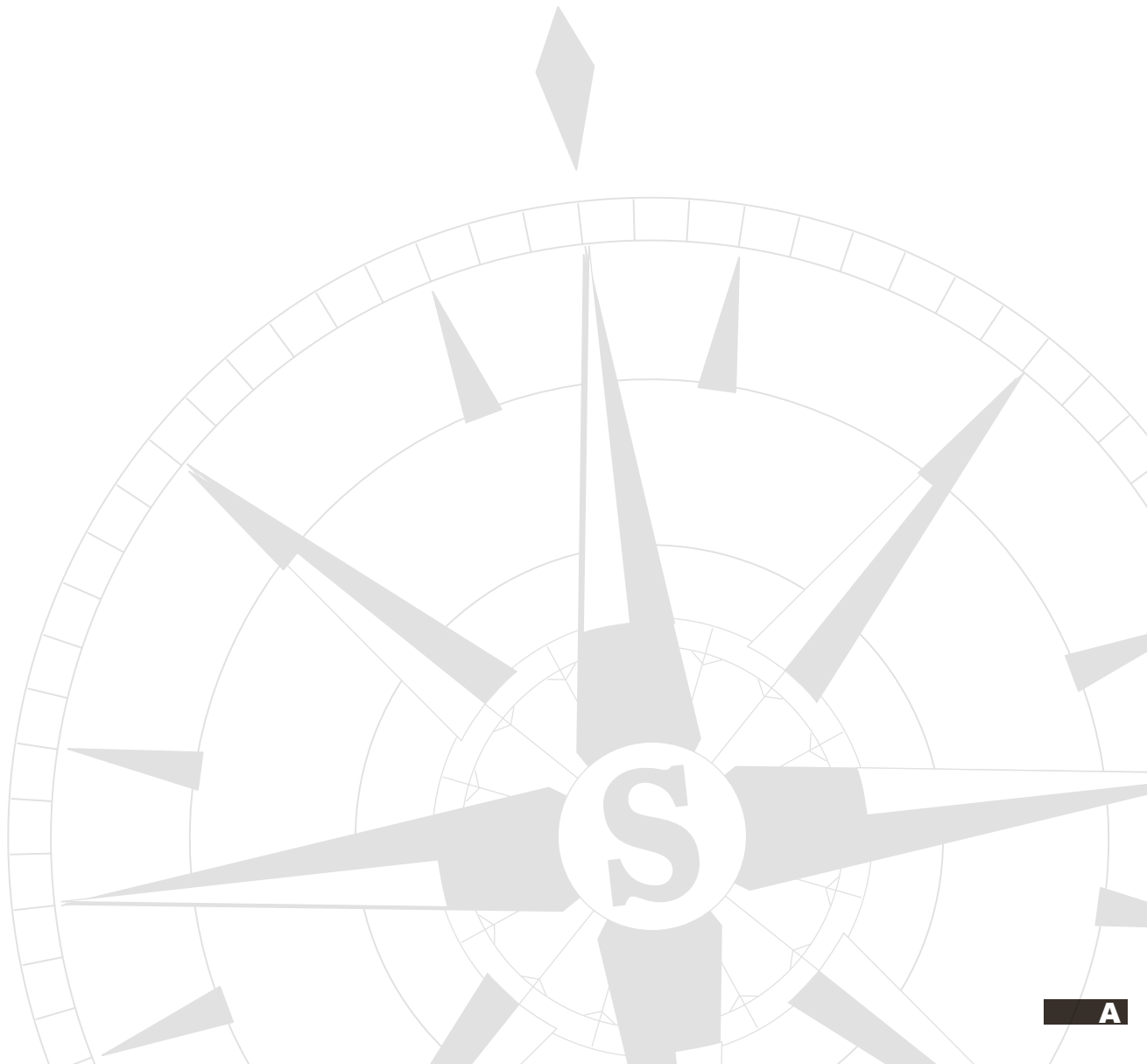
Appendix

Appendix Item A: Maricopa Community College District Service Area Map

Appendix Item B: Maricopa Community College District Vision, Mission, and Values

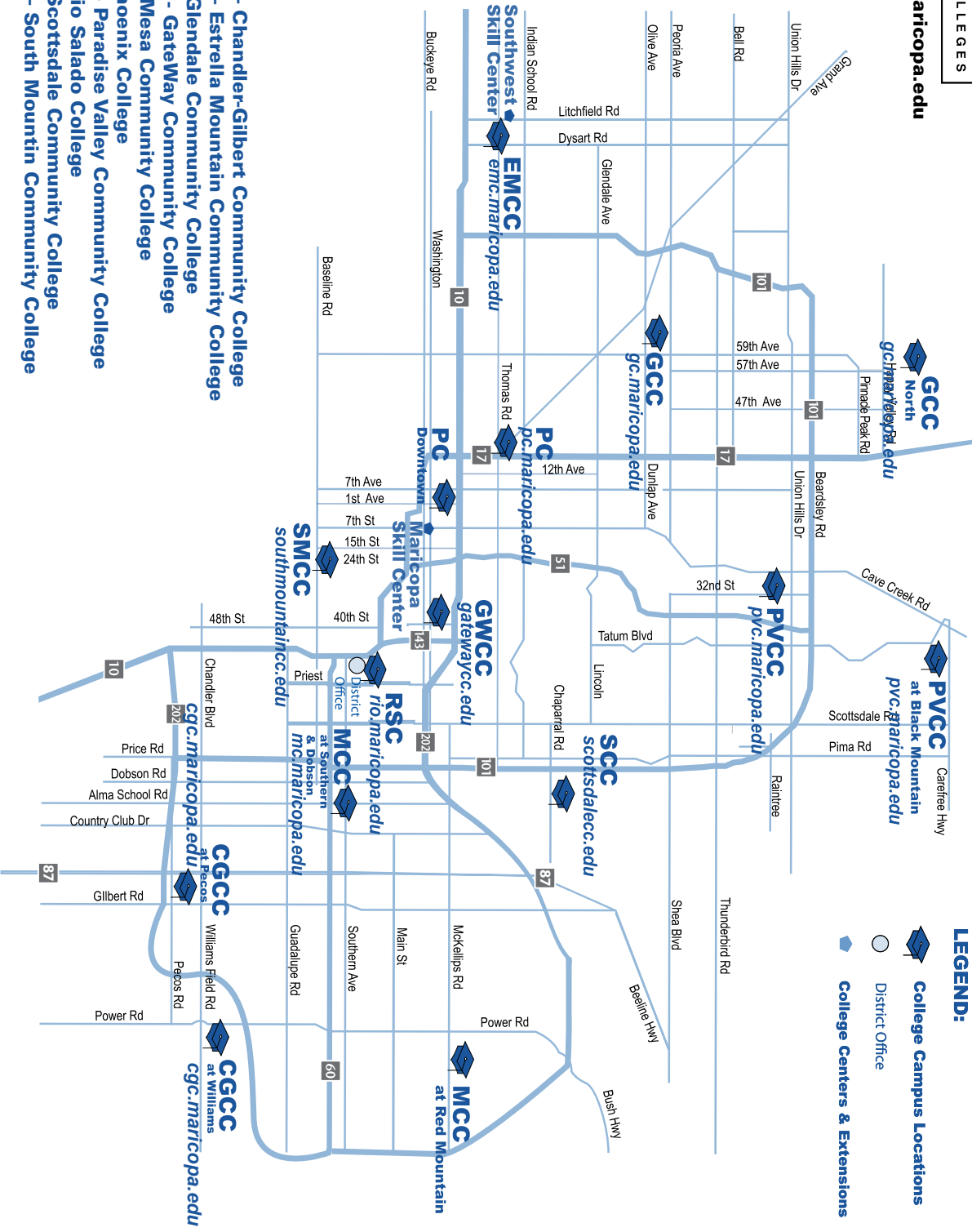
Appendix Item C: Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix Item D: SMCC Guiding Principles, Budget Process





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- CGCC - Chandler-Gilbert Community College
- EMCC - Estrella Mountain Community College
- GCC - Glendale Community College
- GWCC - Gateway Community College
- MCC - Mesa Community College
- PC - Phoenix College
- PVCC - Paradise Valley Community College
- RIO - Rio Salado College
- SCC - Scottsdale Community College
- SMCC - South Mountain Community College

LEGEND:

- College Campus Locations
- District Office
- College Centers & Extensions

MARICOPA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

I. VISION

A Community of Colleges...Colleges for the Community

... working collectively and responsibly to meet the life-long learning needs of our diverse students and communities.

II. MISSION

The Maricopa Community Colleges provide access to higher education for diverse students and communities. We focus on learning through:

- University Transfer Education
 - General Education
 - Developmental Education
 - Workforce Development
 - Student Development Services
 - Continuing Education
 - Community Education
 - Civic Responsibility
 - Global Engagement
-

III. VALUES

The Maricopa Community Colleges are committed to:

Community - We value all people – our students, our employees, their families, and the communities in which they live and work. We value our global community of which we are an integral part.

Excellence - We value excellence and encourage our internal and external communities to strive for their academic, professional and personal best.

Honesty and Integrity - We value academic and personal honesty and integrity and believe these elements are essential in our learning environment. We strive to treat each other with respect, civility and fairness.

Inclusiveness - We value inclusiveness and respect for one another. We believe that team work is critical, that each team member is important and we depend on each other to accomplish our mission.

Innovation - We value and embrace an innovative and risk-taking approach so that we remain at the forefront of global educational excellence.

Learning - We value lifelong learning opportunities that respond to the needs of our communities and are accessible, affordable, and of the highest quality. We encourage dialogue and the freedom to have an open exchange of ideas for the common good.

Responsibility - We value responsibility and believe that we are each accountable for our personal and professional actions. We are responsible for making our learning experiences significant and meaningful.

Stewardship - We value stewardship and honor the trust placed in us by the community. We are accountable to our communities for the efficient and effective use of resources as we prepare our students for their role as productive world citizens.

MARICOPA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This document represents an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Maricopa County Community College District (the District or MCCCCD), on behalf of each college and center currently established (see Appendix A) or that may be established in the future and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), a commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA). The original MOU was developed in response to the Commission's need for: an (institution) external financial audit by a certified public accountant or a public agency at least every two years and that an institution's financial practices, records, and reports demonstrate fiscal viability to meet General Institutional Requirements (GIR's) that were in effect at the time (GIR's 19 and 21, respectively).

The Board of Trustees of HLC adopted new Criteria for Accreditation and therefore this MOU has been updated. As a multi-college district (institution), the Governmental Accounting Standards Board's (GASB) current Generally Accepted Accounting Principles do not permit the State of Arizona's Auditor General's Office to issue individual audit reports for the Maricopa Colleges. Therefore, this MOU outlines an appropriate pattern of evidence to be made available by MCCCCD for purposes of addressing Criterion One, Core Component-1E and Criterion Two, Core Component – 2B and Operational Indicators for Financial Strength required by the annual report, all of which are necessary and required for meeting the Criteria for Accreditation. This document focuses on criteria related to financial resources/uses and assurances that MCCCCD colleges and centers have accurately reported their financial position and provided records that demonstrate efficient management of individual expenditure budgets consistent with maintaining the fiscal viability of the District.

HISTORY

The Maricopa County Community College District was established in 1962 under the provisions of legislation enacted by the Arizona State Legislature in 1960. This legislation created the Arizona State Junior College System and provided for the formation of junior college districts on a county basis throughout the State. At that time, there was one college in the system, Phoenix (Junior) College, founded in 1920. Today, the District consists of ten colleges that are accredited by the HLC or its predecessor, NCA, two skill centers, several education centers, and a support services center. MCCCCD comprises the largest single provider of higher education in Arizona, and is among the nation's largest community college districts.

FINANCIAL REPORTING ENTITY

The highest authoritative source for financial accounting and reporting standards applicable to the District is pronouncements of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

GASB Statement 14, "The Financial Reporting Entity," applies to all state and local governments and special-purpose governments.

Maricopa County Community College District meets the definition of a special-purpose government because it:

- is a legal entity separate from other entities,
- was established under the statutory authority of the State of Arizona as a political subdivision of the state,
- has a separately elected governing board, and
- is fiscally independent of other state and local government entities. An entity is fiscally independent if it has the authority to:
 - determine its own budget without another government having the authority to approve or modify that budget,
 - levy taxes or set rates or charges without approval by another government, and
 - issue bonded debt without approval by another government.

NOTE: Arizona's community college districts were subject to general oversight by the Arizona Community College Board until Fiscal Year 2002-2003. This oversight was ministerial or procedural as opposed to substantive and did not diminish the fiscal independence of the District. The college board and funding for the board have been eliminated by the State legislature and Governor and governance authority for community colleges now rests with locally elected governing boards for each district.

GASB 14 also establishes criteria for determining what financial activities or organizations should be included in a governmental financial reporting entity that consists of the primary government and its component units. Under the definitions and criteria of GASB 14, Maricopa Colleges is a primary government and is NOT a component unit of any other government. Also, the colleges and centers within Maricopa Colleges are NOT component units of the District but are "part of" the District.

Therefore, the financial reporting entity having financial accountability is the District and its Governing Board, not the separate colleges or centers. The colleges and centers have no separate legal standing and have no separate financial accountability for property tax revenues, state appropriation revenues, cash and investments, or liabilities including bonded debt. Legal authority, responsibility, and financial accountability for such revenues, assets, and liabilities rest with the District on behalf of and for the benefit of all colleges and centers. The colleges and centers are allocated portions of the District's expenditure budget for operational purposes. All accounting of actual financial activity is performed at the district wide level by the District Support Services Center.

The District has an annual audit performed by the Arizona Auditor General's Office and issues a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) using the reporting model promulgated by GASB 34/35 for colleges and universities. The Financial Section of the CAFR includes the audit opinion, the financial statements of the District, and notes to the financial statements. The Introductory Section and Statistical Section of the CAFR contain additional valuable information that is beyond the scope of the audit. The CAFR also contains a Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Assets by College/Center, subject to auditing procedures applied in

the audit of the basic financial statements. This schedule is not a required part of the financial statements but such data and other evidence is required by HLC in order to determine that criteria related to finances have been met by the individual institution under accreditation review.

Accordingly, the District makes the assurances stated herein in a good faith effort to provide all required financial evidence to HLC.

ASSURANCES

1. The District will provide evidence that it upholds and protects its integrity. One example of evidence is that the District has exercised its responsibility to the public to ensure that the organization operates legally, responsibly and with fiscal honesty (Criterion One: Core Component 1E).

According to GASB Concepts Statement No. 1, Objectives of Financial Reporting – “financial reporting plays a major role in fulfilling government’s duty to be publicly accountable in a democratic society.” Therefore, evidence will be in the form of the most recently issued CAFR, audited by a certified public accountant or a public audit agency (Attachment A). The CAFR will include an audit opinion, financial statements of the District as a whole, and notes to the financial statements, prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Additionally, the CAFR will have a supplemental schedule of revenues and expenses by college.

2. The District will provide evidence that its resource base supports the educational programs of its institutions and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future (Criterion Two – Core Component 2B).

Evidence will include, at a minimum:

- (a) The District continues to budget using the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) model although the financial statements are prepared using the new GASB 34/35 reporting model. The Adopted Budget book for the current and prior year includes district wide budgeted revenues and expenditures by fund. Also included are expenditure budget allocations by college and supplemental expenditure allocations available for growth and contingencies as needed. (Attachment B)
- (b) A budget-to-actual Expenditure Analysis by college comparing the current and prior years (Attachment C, example for Paradise Valley Community College).
- (c) The District's most recently issued Multi-Year Financial Plan including projected revenues and expenditures by fund and underlying assumptions. While detail by college is not specified, expenditure allocations would be consistent with those in the Adopted Budget given the effect of stated assumptions Attachment D.

- (d) Any additional narrative necessary to explain programs or fiscal priorities unique to the individual institution and in relation to the District as a whole.
3. The District will provide the operational indicators for financial strength that are required by HLC on a district wide basis (Attachment E).

Each college within the District is responsible for sound fiscal management of programs and operations within allocated expenditure budgets that are driven by available resources. The colleges are dependent on the District as a whole for major revenues (property taxes and state aid) that are determined and received on a district- wide basis for the benefit of each college and center.

Traditionally, reporting has been limited to revenues, expenses and changes in net assets. There has been a change with the operational indicators for the annual report. The operational indicators now require information from both the Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets and the Statement of Net Assets. With the addition of the Statement of Net Assets information (assets, liabilities and net assets), the calculation became impossible for each individual college in the District. While the preparation of a schedule by college using revenues and expenses (transactional-type detail) is achievable, calculations requiring assets, liabilities and net assets (Statement of Net Assets) are not possible.

As stated previously, the financial reporting entity having financial accountability is the District. The Statement of Net Assets is designed to display the financial position at a point in time for the financial reporting entity. Assets, such as Cash and Investments, are held in the name of the District and managed as a centralized function for the benefit of all colleges. Debt is also issued on a District level and not by individual college. Thus, the most meaningful and reliable demonstration of fiscal viability is provided by evidence from a district wide perspective.

Evidence will be in the form of:

- (a) Calculations of the District's financial strength operational indicators for the most recently completed fiscal year (as required by HLC, Attachment E). These indicators provide several measures of an institution's financial viability.
- (b) Current listings of bond ratings for debt issues of the District (Financial Strength (Attachment F)

Debt is issued in the name of the District and is administered as a centralized function for the benefit of all colleges. Individual colleges are responsible for debt service of capital lease obligations for some equipment. This represents less than 1% of all District debt. All other debt service is managed and budgeted on a district wide basis from district wide resources. The strength of the District's

credit worthiness stems from its financial stability and provides a foundation of fiscal viability to each college and center.

(c) A Current Unrestricted General Operations Budget Analysis/Financial Stability Report for the most recent fiscal year and current period in the current fiscal year (Attachment G). The District's Governing Board has developed a Fiscal Management Policy for Financial Stability that is the cornerstone upon which each fiscal year budget is developed and adopted. Goals for financial stability enable the District to manage revenue shortfalls and cash flows to ensure continued operations, and to provide for unforeseen contingencies without impairing the level of quality service needed to respond to our customers. To this end, the financial stability policy guides the District's budgeting process and requires the following:

- Assurance that current general operating budget balances remain at least eight percent (8%) of Current Unrestricted General Operations Budget revenues. This ratio is monitored by the Governing Board each month but final compliance is measured by the actual June 30 Current Unrestricted General Fund Balance, as a percentage of Current Unrestricted General Operations budget Revenues. The financial stability of MCCCCD will be maintained in perpetuity.
- Only the Governing Board and the Chancellor may authorize a different first priority for budget development and adoption.

d) Other relevant policies to ensure financial integrity include requirements for:

- Sufficient information to enable an understanding of planning assumptions, accurate projection of revenues and expenses and separation of both capital and operational revenues and expenses. The Adopted Budget includes such information and will be provided.
- Avoidance of expenses in any fiscal year of more resources than is conservatively projected to be received or carried forward in that period. The Adopted Budget and Current Unrestricted General Operations budget analysis/financial stability report provides such documentation and will be provided.
- A proposed budget that reflects stated Board priority goals within the parameters of conservatively projected available revenues and a balanced budget. The Adopted Budget includes such information and will be provided.
- The CAFR contains a Statement of Cash Flows that provides additional detail on the use of cash balances throughout the year as well as beginning and ending balances.

SUMMARY

This document is intended to provide assurances to HLC that necessary and relevant evidence related to financial criteria will be made available on a consistent basis for any institution of the District under accreditation review. Such assurances and consistency facilitate the accreditation process by enhancing the view of the District as a whole and the understanding of the roles of the colleges and centers as part of a system.

DATED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2004.

MARICOPA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Rufus Glasper, PhD, CPA
Chancellor

Debra Thompson, MPA
Acting Vice Chancellor for Business
Services

DATED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2004.

Dr. Steven Crow
Higher Learning Commission, a Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

APPENDIX A
Colleges and Centers* of the Maricopa Community Colleges

Phoenix College (main campus; center listed below)
City Colleges Center

Glendale Community College (main campus; centers listed below)
Glendale Community College North
University College Center at ASU West

GateWay Community College (main campus; skill center listed below)
Maricopa Skill Center

Mesa Community College (campuses and centers listed below)
Mesa Community College
Mesa Community College at Red Mountain
Mesa Community College at the Williams Campus
MCC Downtown Centennial Way
MCC Downtown Country Club and Brown
ASU Research Park
Business and Industry Institute

Scottsdale Community College

Rio Salado College (main campus at Tempe; centers listed below)
Rio East Valley
Rio Paradise Valley Mall
Rio 7th Ave. Adult Learning Center
Rio Salado School of Dental Hygiene
Rio Luke
Rio Sun Cities Lifelong Learning Center

South Mountain Community College (main campus; centers listed below)
Ahwatukee Foothills Center
Guadalupe Center

Paradise Valley Community College

Chandler Gilbert Community College (main campus and centers listed below)
Chandler Gilbert Pecos Campus
Chandler Gilbert Williams Campus
Sun Lakes Education Center

Estrella Mountain Community College (main campus; skill center listed below)
Southwest Skill Center

* as of May 2004; centers vary in course and program offerings and colleges may offer courses at other locations such as high schools pronouncements of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

GASB Statement 14, "The Financial Reporting Entity," applies to all state and local governments

Guiding Principles

- Keep student success at the center of all our decision making.
- Provide fiscally responsible access to courses, programs, and services central to our mission.
- Be good stewards of the public trust and tax dollars.
- Value, support, and communicate our diverse perspectives in respectful ways.
- Be strategic in our decisions to sustain operations and to position SMCC for the future.