# <u>ASSURANCE SECTION</u>

**REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT**

TO

South Mountain Community College
Phoenix, Arizona

April 6-8, 2009

FOR

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

**EVALUATION TEAM**

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# Contents

## I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. **Purpose of Visit:** The purpose of the visit was a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation

B. **Organizational Context:** South Mountain Community College (SMCC) is a comprehensive college, operating within the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) of Phoenix, Arizona. Each of the ten colleges within the District is individually accredited. SMCC serves the communities of South Phoenix, Ahwatukee, Tempe, Guadalupe, and Laveen. In 1979, SMCC began offering classes, and in 1981, the campus was officially opened. SMCC has been continuously accredited since 1983-84. The College's last comprehensive visit was March, 1999.

C. **Unique Aspects of Visit:** None

D. **Sites or Branch Campuses Visited:** The Team Chair visited the center at Guadalupe and the course site at Ahwatukee .

E. **Distance Education Reviewed:** SMCC delivers its distance education courses via the Blackboard learning management platform.  The Blackboard system is a shared service with the other institutions in the MCCCD.  The team reviewed several distance learning courses which were of very good quality.  Since 2007, SMCC has been utilizing the Quality Matters ™ (QM) program to evaluate its distance education courses.  The institution is to be commended for offering distance education using this program.

F. **Interactions with Constituencies**
President
Vice President of Academic Affairs
Vice President of Student Services
Vice President of Administrative Services
President's Executive Team
Strategic Planning Committee (9)
Faculty Librarian
IT Director
Facilities Manager
Institutional Research Officer
Chancellor of MCCCD
Development Officer
President's Advisory Council (40)
Governing Board Members
Athletic Director
Students (75)
E-learning members (7)
Four individuals regarding finance
Members of Student Services area (14)
SMCC Staff (37)
SMCC Managers (31)
Faculty (36)

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

South Mountain Community College (SMCC), *Charting Futures, Connecting Worlds*, 2009 Self Study Report

SMCC 2009 Institutional Snapshot

Maricopa Financial Plan…Fiscal Year 2003 through 2017 (September 2007)

Governing Board Members Web page

Progress Report 2002, Program Review & Technology

Technology Master Plan 2003-2004

Strategic Plan 2009-2010 Operational Plan – Final Draft

Strategic Planning Document for 2009-2010

Strategic Planning PowerPoint document

SMCC 12-year Bond Planning: Information Technology Needs

Adopted Budget Fiscal Year 2006-2007 [June 13, 2006]

Adopted Budget Fiscal year 2007-08 [June 12, 2007]

Comprehensive Annual Financial Report [Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2006]

SMCC Budget Recommendations

Environmental Scan 2008, 2007, 2006

Maricopa Governance, Policy Manual

South Mountain Community College – College Plan

South Mountain Community College – Faculty Senate Constitution [October 1985]

Integrated Marketing/Communications Plan [FY 2008/2009]

Public Stewardship - Administrative Regulations Table of Contents [web page]

South Mountain Community College, Budget Recommendations College Wide FY 09-10

President's Community Advisory Council [web page]

South Mountain Community College Library Flyer

Strategic Enrollment Management Advisory Committee [web page]

Community College Market Scan – CLARUS Corporation

SMCC Strategic Plan

MCCCD Strategic Planning Website - http://www.maricopa.edu/stratplan/

MCCCD Strategic Planning Handbook FY 2009/2010 - http://www.maricopa.edu/stratplan/docs/StratPlanning%20Handbook%20FY2009-10.pdf

MCCCD Institutional Effectiveness Website - http://www.maricopa.edu/business/ir/

MCCCD HR Demographics Website - http://www.maricopa.edu/hrweb/demographics.php

MCCCD Summary, Strategic Plan: Operational Plans FY 2008 – 2009 - http://www.maricopa.edu/stratplan/docs/Strategic_Plan_FY2008-09.pdf

MCCCD Performance Dashboard - http://www.maricopa.edu/stratplan/Dashboard/Monitoring%20Report%202008/Dashboard%202008.pdf

Strategic Plans folder in Self-Study Report Documentation area of Resource Room

New SIS: Trials and Tribulations of "Going Live" Resource Room

EScan Reports 2006, 2007, and 2008

SMCC 12-year Bond Planning: Information Technology Needs

QualityMatters™ Rubric workbook 2008-2010 Edition

Draft eLearning Plan

January 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009 Technology Master Plan

FY 2004 – FY 2014 Information Technology financial plan
Information Technology Project Listing
Maricopa Community Colleges End of the Year Report 2007-2008
Maricopa Community Colleges Student Learning Outcomes for Student Affairs 2006-2007
South Mountain Community College Student Affairs Assessment Workshop Report
Department of Advisement and Recruitment Student Learning Outcomes
Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction 2009 Innovation of the Year Awards Program
South Mountain Community College Advisement Model Task Force Proposal
South Mountain Community College Formative Assessment Fall 2005
South Mountain Community College Summative Assessment Spring 2005
South Mountain Community College Formative Assessment Fall 2006
South Mountain Community College Summative Assessment Spring 2006
Formative and Summative Evaluation 2005
Biosciences Courses
Bilingual Nursing Program
Workforce Development
Cisco program review
APRSAL Program Review
Maricopa District Board Policies
Residential Faculty Policy (RFP) Manual
Adjunct Faculty Policy Manual
Managers, Administration and Technology (MAT) Policy Manual
Professional Staff Association (PSA) Policy Manual
College Safety and Security Policy Manual
Crafts Policy Manual
Faculty Handbook
SMCC Organizational Chart

## II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. **Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process:** The 2009 self-study process was led by self-study chair, assisted by a student services liaison and project writer, and steering committee members, and supported by project managers and criterion committee members. HLC team members found the process to be college-wide and inclusive as criterion committee memberships were composed of faculty, professional staff, and support staff.

B. **Integrity of the Self-Study Report:** The HLC team applauds SMCC for use of data in the self-study, but also encourages the College to continue building its use of evidence and data for future decision making, analysis, and evaluation. The HLC Team concludes the self-study process was completed with integrity and inclusive involvement of college personnel.

C. **Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges**

The HLC Team considers the response of the College to previously identified challenges to be adequate, and applauds SMCC for increased commitment to improving assessment of student learning by entering the HLC Assessment Academy.

**D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment**
Requirements were fulfilled. The Team received two separate positive comments.

## III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The HLC reviewed the required compliance areas. Requirements were fulfilled.

## IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

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

1. **Evidence that Core Components are met**
   South Mountain Community College (SMCC) has adopted mission documents that clearly define its role, purpose, and reflects its commitment to its constituency.  A review of institutional documents, web pages, campus facilities, policy documents, as well as discussions with SMCC employees demonstrated the College's commitment to those it serves.

   South Mountain Community College declares, through its mission, that it provides quality higher education for a diverse community; creates a caring teaching and learning environment; and promotes student development that advances citizenship in a global community.

   The SMCC, through its policies, curriculum, facilities, employees, and Governing Board members, particularly express a dedication to, and an appreciation for diversity in its many forms.  Indeed, the College has established the Guadalupe Center, not only as an additional instructional site, but equally as a hub of support and encouragement for persons of color in this very ethnically diverse region of the larger Phoenix area.  The College's nursing program is structured to train bilingual (Spanish and English-speaking) students to be nurses. Even the buildings themselves carry large embossed elements that symbolizing the Hohokam indigenous people, further signaling the College's attentiveness to diversity.

   The Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD), the host organization of South Mountain Community College, has a long history of skilled management of its financial condition.  The evidence presented in the institutional documents, reveal that the District has never had a material finding in its annual audits.  Furthermore, the District has received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, enjoys a AAA bond rating, and has a substantial fund balance.  Though the District and College are engaged in cost reduction strategies, these aforementioned indicators suggest the ability to advance the College's mission.

   Discussions with faculty, administrators, and other staff indicate that South Mountain employees have a deep understanding of the issues and influences in the lives of

their students and use this understanding as a means to address the needs of individual learners.  The College offers a wide variety of services to students including an Information Commons, which is also open to the general public, library, and learning resource center.  The one-stop model of their Student Enrollment Services building demonstrates the commitment to providing students with a welcoming environment that is easy to navigate and easily accessible.

SMCC faculty and staff survey results indicate the College's mission, vision, and values are well understood.  Through the team's conversations with campus administrators, staff, and faculty, it was clear that the mission, vision, and values play a role in the daily operations of the College. The College provides a wide variety of programs and services at locations designed to meet the unique needs of their community.  The President's Advisory Council members praised the institution's expansions into Laveen, Guadalupe, and Ahwatukee as well as targeted programs such as the Bilingual Nursing program and a paraprofessional training program with Roosevelt Elementary School District.  In addition, the institution has specific programs for learners including Achieving a College Education (ACE), the AAEC Charter High School, Upward Bound, TRIO-STEP, an Honors Program, as well as several Community Outreach Programs and Grants.  Finally, the President's Advisory Council indicated that SMCC provides a point of pride in higher education for the local community that it serves.

South Mountain Community College utilizes a traditional academic model of governance including an active faculty senate.  In addition to the faculty senate, the College's academic program chairs are democratically elected.  Faculty generally indicated that they have a strong voice on campus.  This was particularly evident in the strong sense of ownership faculty have with the development of curriculum.

President Atwater was praised by the President's Advisory Council members for his leadership within the community.  It was clear through conversations with the President as well as with college staff that the President lives the mission of SMCC.

The College employee community is actively engaged in the operations of the campus.  Employees were candid in their conversations with team members and were candid with one another.  The environment on campus was collegial.  Several comments were made acknowledging where known differences in opinion might exist – such as an area where a member of the staff might disagree with an opinion of senior leadership.  However, where these differences existed, there was a sense that open dialog is welcomed and encouraged.

The College recently revised the process it uses for development of its strategic plan. The revised process appears to be open and inclusive. The College utilizes a large planning team made up of employees from all areas of the College. College employees indicated they were familiar with the strategic plan, the general planning process, and their role in contributing to the Strategic Plan. The revised process begins when the President establishes the priorities. Once these priorities are established each functional area develops its own set of objectives.  For each objective, resources needed to achieve the objective are identified. These objectives

and resource needs are matched together with an indication of the party responsible for achievement of the objective.  All departmental plans are integrated together into the College's overall strategic plan, which is also put into the format required by the Maricopa County Community College district and is submitted to the district office for review.

2.  **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention**

According to District Governing Board Members, the Board is in transition, notably prompted by an influx of new members on the five-member, policy governance-structured body. A review of board minutes, board policies, electronic media, and discussions with members and employees suggest that the board is operating in a manner inconsistent with current policy and practice (i.e., Manner of Governing, Board Member's Code of Conduct, Delegation to the Chancellor, and Chancellor Job Description,).  Further, it appears that the board's communication and operating style is inconsistent with good CEO-Staff relations as described by policy.  Prompt resolution of these inconsistencies is essential for effective board and CEO leadership as well as clear and effective operations at the campus level (d & e).

In response to a finding of the 1999 team visit, the College developed and implemented a technology planning process. This process is tied to the College's overall strategic planning and budgeting processes. The College also has established a large group of faculty and staff who meet regularly as the College Technology Committee.  This group has a formalized annual agenda of topics and activities.  However, discussions with the leadership of the College's Technology Committee indicate that is no formal assessment or evaluation of the effectiveness of the College's Technology planning process, or implementation of that plan is conducted.  While the institution is relatively small, and technology expenditures represent less than two percent of the College's overall budget, they represent greater than 20 percent of the Plant Fund expenditures on an annual basis.  Furthermore, the Technology Committee has also identified several goals in their plan which they hope to meet.  Without doing any formalized assessment activity they cannot effectively determine if they are meeting these goals. The Team suggests the College further develop the planning process by adding a formalized assessment activity (d).

There were several inconsistencies noted during the visit between District responsibilities and SMCC responsibilities. Specifically, while eLearning efforts centered around the single instance of Blackboard, and the district's fiduciary and technical support of this tool, all seemingly very positive, the district's implementation of a single ERP system and launch of **my.maricopa.edu** is wrought with problems, including a lack of funding and overall management and responsibility structure.  In addition, several questions surrounding the overall structure and support system for eLearning arose during the visit.  These questions include how the College will pay for development of eLearning courses, whether each institution in the MCCCD district will be encouraged to offer eLearning courses, and the way in which eLearning courses are identified within the **my.maricopa.edu** and the ERP system to allow for proper advising of students and planning on the part of the institution.

The team suggests the institution work collaboratively within the district to develop unified policies and procedures that allow the institution and the district to advance its use of eLearning as an instructional tool (d).

3. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**

4. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**

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

**CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE.** The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

1. **Evidence that Core Components are met**

In preparation for its future, and to ensure its success, South Mountain Community College has undertaken a focused approach to planning. To provide a context for growth, program development, and marketing, the College engaged the services of the CLARUS group. The strategy results facilitated by the CLARUS group are planned for implementation beginning fall 2009.  In some cases, SMCC has set resource levels through 2017 for allocations and distributions needed to achieve strategic directions and initiatives. This advanced planning provides clarity in direction setting and for the allocation of limited resources.

The College enjoys significant alignment of its planning documents both internally, and as required, with the Maricopa County Community College District priorities, including the District vision, mission, and goals. The Strategic Plan [2009-2010] provides three priorities: (1) Improve Student Access, Persistence and Success, (2) Further SMCC's Cultural Competence, and (3) Optimize Resources.  Financially, planning documents outline the linkage between projected expenditures and item categories adopted in the strategic plan, and revenue projections are based upon historic activity and economic data.  This level of alignment provides for meaningful congruence of effort throughout the District

The College has provided for its future regarding projected regional population growth.  Based upon demographic data, and with the availability of bond funding support, SMCC acquired 43 acres of land in Laveen, Arizona, and six acres of

land in Ahwatukee, for a future campus to address anticipated needs. Additionally, the College has entered into a partnership with the City of Phoenix that will result in a new library to be located on the main campus beginning fall 2009.  The new Community Library will provide for library collections, classrooms, and open computer labs as well as invite members of the local community to the campus.  It will also house the college Teaching and Learning Center (TLC). This level of collaboration and advancement suggests that SMCC seeks new opportunities to achieve its mission and is mindful of the resources necessary to address anticipated need.

2.      **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention**

South Mountain Community College does not currently have an assessment of the level of its deferred facility maintenance   Budget allocations from the District office for remodeling and new construction have been reduced from $5 to $0/sq. ft. and $15 to $10/sq. ft. respectively, thereby suggesting a declining level of resources for ongoing operating and repair costs.  The Team suggests the College develop an assessment/evaluation process for facilities maintenance. This process should assist in creating a better understanding of current and future repair and replacement costs for existing facility and infrastructure as well as budget development and management. This process is especially needed with new facilities coming on line in the near future.

3.      **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**

4.      **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**

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

**CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING.** The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

1.      **Evidence that Core Components are met**

Multiple activities are in place at the College for the assessment of student learning.  For example, a campus wide formative evaluation activity takes place the fifth week of fall and spring semesters known as "Academic Assessment

Week".  Faculty members provide students with a survey that allows students to comment on course satisfaction and understanding. Then, if needed, faculty members use student comments to make course adjustments designed to improve student learning. Additionally, at the end of each semester, a summative evaluation is developed which examines both direct and indirect measures of student learning.  From these formative and summative evaluations, the math faculty have developed a common exam designed to better determine the success of learning for beginning and intermediate algebra students.

Science laboratories are well staffed and equipped with state of the art equipment and appear to provide an effective learning environment for students. Additionally, the Team observed students actively engaged in the learning process through the use of equipment and supplies needed for experimentation.

General Education (GE) outcomes have been developed along with a plan to create course outcomes that can be mapped to those GE outcomes. Additionally, a plan will be developed to implement and evaluate course level assessments of student learning.  For example, critical and creative thinking would be assessed at a course level to determine the level of student learning.

The Team examined a random sampling of full-time and adjunct faculty personnel files.  While many of the files were incomplete (i.e., lacking transcripts and other appropriate credentials), it appears that full time residential faculty and adjunct faculty hold appropriate credentials and qualifications for the areas in which they teach.

The Team talked with students both formally at the student meeting and informally (students working in the community).  In both cases, students reported high satisfaction with instruction and specifically, with the caring and friendly attitude expressed by faculty and staff.

As evidenced by the personnel documents and in conversations with faculty, faculty members are periodically evaluated using a self examination process. The intent of this evaluation process is to improve teaching performance as well as identify strengths and weakness.

In response to the last comprehensive visit, SMCC has developed a program review process. This process allows programs to be reviewed every five years; it focuses mainly on documenting curriculum, student learning assessment, program needs, and program efficiency and effectiveness.

The College is to be commended for its foresight and vision in partnering with the community constituencies to build a community/school library to support the learning of its citizens.

2.      **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention**
Through interviews with students and staff, it was acknowledged that scheduling

of classes is an issue for the College.  For example, the College can cancel up to 40 percent of its offerings during a semester.  Students reported that many times they are unaware that classes are cancelled until they "show up the first day of class and are already sitting in their seats".  The Team recommends that the College utilize the CLARUS recommendations to improve the scheduling of courses (b).

Although the Team examined the personnel files of faculty and staff, there were inconsistencies between the files housed at the District office and those housed at the College.  Regardless of the District personnel policy regarding these files, there must be consistency in what is contained in those files. Some files had original transcripts, some contained copies, and some had neither. The Team suggests SMCC conduct a thorough review of personnel files and develop a documentation guideline (b).

While some activities are in place to address student learning, a systematic process for assessing student learning at a course, program and institutional level has yet to be developed.  There is no evidence that data are being collected, analyzed, and used to improve learning. While, the team applauds the College for committing time and resources to the Assessment Academy of the HLC, it recommends that the College continue its work with the Academy to further design a process that focuses on developing stated learning outcomes, measures for those outcomes, and strategies to improve student learning at the program level and in general education (c).

Although a program review process has been developed, it is evidenced through conversation with faculty and staff, along with review of documents that further development is needed to strengthen the process to make it more effective.  There is little evidence on how information is being used to improve or modify the program and curriculum; nor is there information on how the process is aligned with budgeting, planning, or program feasibility. The Team suggests the College add the latter information to its process (c).

Although faculty members are evaluated using a self examination process, the process does not include student and/or peer input.  Nor was there any evidence showing that the feedback garnered from these evaluations were actually used to improve teaching. The Team suggests SMCC examine the faculty evaluation process so that there is a more holistic approach (c).

3.    **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**

4.    **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**

**Recommendation of the Team**
**Criterion is met; No Commission follow-up is recommended**

**CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE.**
The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

1.　　　**Evidence that Core Components are met**

The College's planning and fiscal allocations demonstrate that it values a life of learning. With the passing of a 2004 general obligation bond, SMCC invested $59,000,000 in its infrastructure. Campus projects included renovated classrooms, labs and equipment, a teaching and learning center, a new library soon to be integrated with the City of Phoenix (2011), a performing arts center, an expanded Guadalupe Learning Center, and a new rental facility in the community of Ahwatukee. In addition, SMCC used grant funds to build the Desert Skies Telescope Observatory, available for use by faculty, students and community members.

The District board approved the dissemination of statements supporting freedom of inquiry. For example, the College maintains full-time and part-time faculty manuals with direct statements on the subject of academic freedom.  In both manuals, SMCC vows to protect the rights of faculty when it comes to "freedom in the classroom," with particular emphasis on the freedom faculty have when it comes to "discussing their subjects." In SMCCs history, there have been no documented infringements upon this right. Furthermore, at both the local level and the level of the Maricopa district, faculty and appropriate external entities are involved in the creation, evaluation and review of curriculum.  Evidence for the faculty ownership of curricula came in the form of a 2007 SMCC faculty survey where 95 percent of respondents agreed to the statement, "I have the appropriate level of involvement in designing curriculum."

The SMCC's Associate degree plans contain courses that meet the standards of the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC). Within the AGEC, a uniform system of course numbers and a common commitment to similar learning outcomes ensures that two-year college students receive full credit upon transfer to Arizona's public universities.

The College recognizes the value of linking curricular and co-curricular activities. The campus hosts guest speakers, musicians, art shows, photo exhibits, plays, science fairs, and sports events. In 2003 the College welcomed Maya Angelou to its campus, the Phoenix Symphony performed on the Arts Center stage, and Ballet Arizona held a performance for students, staff, and community.  In addition, the SMCC Intercultural Education Committee, through a special

allocation from the District office,  sponsors international activities and programs on campus, often in conjunction with Student Life.

SMCC encourages innovation and recognition of good teaching and learning. Individuals or teams are eligible each year for both a local and district-wide Innovation of the Year Award. Between the years 2002-2006, SMCC was recognized five times  at the district wide innovation awards. In addition, since 2002, faculty have been recognized annually at the National Institute for Staff and Faculty Development (NISOD) Conference. The College also acknowledges and publishes a record of faculty, student and staff achievements in its publication titled *The SMCC Messenger*.

The College gives attention to the currency and relevance of courses and programs. Specifically, in order to respond to changing demographics and the needs of its diverse constituents, SMCC solicits input and feedback from 11 different Advisory Boards. President Atwater also convenes a 70 member Community Advisory Council representing a wide cross-section of organizations in the South Mountain community. The Advisory Boards and the Advisory Council consult with college staff on the most effective means to develop and provide educational services. In addition, SMCC faculty serve on disciplinary councils consisting of full-time teachers from across the Maricopa district.

The College encourages co-curricular activities that relate to the development of social responsibility. For example, the student governing board partners with a local food bank which serves up to 500 local families per month. Annual Martin Luther King Day activities include student led adopt-a-street public clean-up efforts, and SMCC students also take part in large-scale tree planting projects on Arbor Day. In addition, the SMCC Student Affairs Office maintains a list of learning outcomes that relate to co-curricular activities, and the Office assesses student achievement of co-curricular goals.

The College maintains a formal statement on intellectual property rights in its Residential Faculty Policy (RFP) Manual. The policy distinguishes between work-for-hire and "work created independently at the faculty member's own initiative, and with ordinary use of college resources such as the library, offices, and computer network services."

2.    **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention**

Although SMCC has committed to participating in the Assessment Academy sponsored by the HLC, the Team noted that continued institutional attention is required to establish course and program outcomes that ensure effective preparation for continued learning (a).

Current budgetary restraints have limited the number of funds available for staff and faculty development. In the long term, however, when budgetary constraints

have eased, institutional attention should focus on the reinstatement of professional development programs including funds for travel, conference registration and sabbatical (a).

The College announces the achievements of faculty, students and staff in its *Messenger* publication; however, the institution could take formal steps to record and catalog the accomplishments of its faculty. An on-campus entity such as the Center for Teaching and Learning might serve as a repository of information about faculty grants, publications, presentations, and updates to training or professional development (d).

During the site visit, SMCC faculty reported difficulty obtaining access to the College's newly implemented student record systems. Division chairs described feeling comfortable with their level of access to student information, but as faculty take on broader roles in student advising, it will become increasingly important for the College to both improve access to student records and train personnel to use the student information system (d).

3.   **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**


4.   **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**


**Recommendation of the Team**
**Criterion is met; No Commission follow-up is recommended**


**CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE.** As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

1.   **Evidence that Core Components are met**

Interactions with faculty and staff revealed that the College has engaged many of its constituencies.  The President's Advisory Council, which Dr. Atwater revitalized after he arrived at the SMCC in 2001, has become an active partner. This council, which is both ethnically and geographically diverse, meets twice annually to provide advice and counsel. Council members even actively campaigned for the 2004 bond referendum and annually raise funds for endowed scholarships.

The College has sought to serve its community by opening its facilities, including the library and computer labs, to area residents. This commitment has expanded

to the new performing arts center which brings cultural arts activities to the community, and the plans for the new community library, to be located at the college entrance to serve both college students and the community at large.

SMCC is actively involved with area high schools through dual enrollment and the Achieving a College Education (ACE) program. The partnership with the on-campus charter school is an exemplary program that gives high school students the opportunity to complete an associate degree while attending high school.

The College has sought to serve its entire region by developing a satellite centers in Guadalupe, and course sites in Laveen and Ahwatukee.   The Guadalupe Center was developed in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club, the City of Guadalupe, and the Pasqua Yaqui tribe. This exemplary project embraces its role in serving three distinct cultures – the Pasqua Yaqui tribe, persons with Latin American roots, and the most recent arrivals from Western Europe -- and in providing educational services to help these cultures flourish.

SMCC was initially developed as a liberal arts school with a primary mission to provide the first two years of a baccalaureate degree. And as such, has developed active, working partnerships with four-year public institutions of higher learning in the state, including an on-site Northern Arizona State facility to house baccalaureate completion programs.

Recently the College has begun to enhance its role in workforce development for the South Mountain area.  Accomplishments to date include the bilingual nursing program, the CISCO academy, and training programs tailored to meet the needs of local employers, such as Spanish for Diamondbacks (a baseball franchise) employees and paraprofessional training for local school district employees.

External constituencies, as represented by the President's Advisory Council, voiced appreciation for the services of SMCC.  This was demonstrated in 2004 when the district bond referendum passed by 76 percent or greater in each precinct in the college area.  Internal constituencies – students and staff – spoke of their appreciation of the College and the services it provides area residents.

3. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention**

Currently advisory committees only meet when a particular curriculum needs updating or changing. Each program should recruit area employers to serve on an advisory committee that would meet regularly to help review the program curriculum and instructional equipment to assure program outcomes are meeting current industry standards. The advisory committee could also help secure donations for the program as well as identify internships and job placement opportunities.  A healthy, active advisory committee is key in developing and maintaining viable AAS programs.

The team suggests SMCC develop a process to assess student learning outcomes for AAS programs so that they can document what completers know and are able to do. Through the results of this data analyses, SMCC could use the information to continuously improve their career programs.

3.   **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**

4.   **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**

**Recommendation of the Team**
**Criterion is met; No Commission follow-up is recommended**

## V. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

**A. Affiliation Status: Continued Accreditation**

Rationale for recommendation: Through interviews and a review of evidence provided online and in the resource room, and through the submitted self-study, the Team concluded that South Mountain Community College, part of the Maricopa County Community College District, has met all the core components of the five criteria for accreditation.

**B. Nature of Organization**

1.   **Legal status: Public**

2.   **Degrees awarded: Associate**

**C. Conditions of Affiliation**

1.   **Stipulation on affiliation status**

   None

2.   **Approval of degree sites**

   Prior Commission approval required

3. **Approval of distance education degree**

   Prior Commission approval required

4. **Reports required**

   **Progress Report**
   **None**

   **Monitoring Report**
   **None**

   **Contingency Report**
   **None**

5. **Other visits scheduled**
   **None**
6. **Organization change request**
   **None**

**D. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action**
            **None**

**E. Summary of Commission Review**
Timing for next comprehensive visit: 2019-2020

Rationale for recommendation: The HLC Team believes by a review of evidence and conversations with internal and external constituents that South Mountain Community College is an institution that is dedicated to its mission and purposes. The Team finds that the College has the necessary and financial resources to accomplish its mission and purposes over the long term. The administration, faculty, and staff are dedicated to meeting the mission of the College. Faculty and staff are qualified and dedicated to improving the college and student learning. The Team believes the College is willing to advance the quality of the college. Further, the Team concurs that SMCC has the necessary organization of administration, faculty, staff and community support linked with strategic planning processes to support continued college success. The Team believes the College is becoming a more solid institution. Finally, the Team finds that SMCC is accomplishing all five Criteria for Accreditation.

# VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS
     **NONE**