

## Mesa Community College Self-Study

A team of consultant-evaluators completed their on-site accreditation visit March 9, 2005. The college received a recommendation for ten years of continued accreditation with no focus visits or monitoring reports. The exit report of the team's visit was extremely complementary to the college, its faculty, staff, students, and the community.

The self-study involved identifying college-wide strengths and challenges in accordance with accreditation criteria and in relation to our mission and values. The self-study report was submitted in early January 2005 and the visit occurred March 7-9, 2005.

## NCA Higher Learning Commission (HLC)

[The Higher Learning Commission \(HLC\) of the North Central Association \(NCA\)](#) is one of six regional accrediting agencies in the United States formed for the purpose of ensuring quality and continuous improvement for institutions of higher education.

The mission of the Higher Learning Commission of the NCA is "Serving the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher learning."

One aspect of accomplishing this mission is the HLC's Restructuring Expectations Project; a multi-year process leading to the revised accreditation criteria intended to reflect expectations for higher education for the 21st Century. The Board of Directors approved the new criteria in February 2003. Mesa Community College will be one of the first colleges in the region to be evaluated based upon these new criteria.

## Accreditation

### What is it?

Accreditation is a voluntary peer review process that provides colleges and universities with the impetus to critically evaluate their purposes and whether those purposes are being achieved. Voluntary accreditation ensures quality and institutional improvement.

### Who is responsible?

Six regional agencies provide institutional accreditation on a geographical basis - Middle States, New England, North Central, Northwest, Southern, and Western.

Mesa Community College is accredited by:

Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and a member of the North Central Association (NCA)

**HLC Address:** 30 N. LaSalle St, Suite 2400, Chicago, IL 60602

**Website:** [www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org](http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org)

**Email:** [info@hlcommission.org](mailto:info@hlcommission.org)

**Telephone:** (800) 621-7440

## Why is it important?

### Accreditation:

- ensures the quality and integrity of MCC's programs and services.
- allows students to transfer credits to other accredited colleges and universities.
- enables students to obtain financial aid and veteran's services.
- allows the college to participate in projects funded by federal grants.
- ensures that the college can recruit and retain quality faculty and staff.

## How does it happen?

Following an initial accreditation, colleges and universities are evaluated every ten years and/or periodically as necessary. Institutions conduct a self study, submit the self-study report to the HLC, and prepare for an onsite visit from peer reviewers representing the accrediting agency. According to the HLC, these consultant-evaluators have two primary responsibilities: to offer advice to institutions to help them improve the quality of the education they provide and to evaluate and confirm the quality of an educational institution.

## The Self Study

According to the Handbook of Accreditation, 2nd Edition (1997), "An institution plans and undertakes a self-study process to determine how well it meets the Commission's Requirements and Criteria and to clarify its plans for improving and enhancing its programs and operations."

Through the self-study process, institutions systematically address several important questions:

- Are we doing what we say we are doing?
- What are our strengths and our challenges?
- How can we position ourselves for the future?

Mesa Community College (MCC) has organized for the accreditation self-study through the formation of several self-study committees. Five of the committees are addressing one of the five accreditation criteria below:

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

#### **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 that are consistent with its mission.

#### **Criterion Five: Engagement and Service**

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

Each criterion has several components and examples of evidence. One committee is focusing on gathering data to address the operational indicators, which require data about the college, students, and staff. An on-line degree committee is reviewing the College's readiness to request approval to offer an on-line degree program. This request for institutional change may be submitted along with the self-study report.

#### **MCC Self-Study Reports**

[Executive Summary \(PDF\)](#)

[2005 Self-Study Report \(PDF\)](#)

#### **Contact for further information**

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