

ABSTRACT OF THE REPORT

Since the last self study in 1998, the organizing themes of the College have become well established and guide decision-making. The planning process is characterized by four significant features:

- It integrates instructional, student services, facilities, operational, and budget planning;
- It is informed by data from a wide variety of sources, including institutional research, external reviews and studies, community input, general and specialized accreditation findings and recommendations, internal academic and student services program reviews, internal and external surveys, student evaluations, and anecdotal evidence;
- It focuses on the achievement of specific and measurable outcomes;
- It is a formal process, but allows for informal input from all segments and members of the College community.

Standard One: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Part A, Mission describes how the College has recently reviewed and revised its mission statement. The revised mission makes explicit the College's commitment to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The Self Study describes how the mission statement relates to planning and decision making, citing the emergence of the Research Committee's role in setting direction for student learning outcomes. As a result of the self study, a process has been adopted for the regular review of the mission statement.

Part B, Institutional Effectiveness discusses the role of participatory governance in goal setting and the evaluation of how well goals are achieved. Citing evidence that the College community believes that planning is well integrated and understood, the self study has identified areas of planning including continued development of the facilities master plan in conjunction with community needs and academic program review, and long-term institutional commitment to retention programs. With District research support, the College's Research Committee has identified Associate degree student learning outcomes; implementation and assessment is still in the early stages. There is recognition that support for campus assessment efforts will require additional resources for research.

Standard Two: Student Learning Programs and Services

Part A, Instructional Programs details the wide range of instructional programs offered at the College. Mesa offers approximately 2,200 class sections each semester. Some courses are offered at off-campus locations and there is a small but growing number of distance education offerings. Several new programs have been developed since the last accreditation; these include Chemistry Technician, Dietetic Supervisor, Fitness Specialist, Geographic Information Systems, Microsoft Administrator Certification, and Multimedia Development.

All of Mesa's courses and degree and certificate programs are approved through the curriculum process at the College and District level and meet required standards. Degree and certificate programs are also approved at the state level. With the curriculum integration project, all courses are being rewritten to more exacting standards. SCANS skills are considered in the preparation of the outlines. A curriculum handbook and a syllabus handbook provide detailed guidance for faculty in the construction and delivery of courses. CurricUNET, a computerized curriculum approval process, was adopted in 2002 to facilitate the complicated task of a three-college curriculum approval process.

Mesa has extensive general education curriculum offerings that conform to the District general education philosophy. Courses proposed for general education receive careful scrutiny at both the College and District curriculum committees to assure that they are appropriate. The articulation officer is responsible for assuring that courses proposed for transfer general education conform to the requirements.

In the first cycle of the academic program review all programs were evaluated and the process itself was evaluated. The process is linked to resource allocation for faculty position priorities and instructional equipment and library materials funding.

In 2002, the President's Cabinet assigned the responsibility for student learning outcomes to the Research Committee. Extensive debate and dialogue, both within and outside the committee, has resulted in the adoption of a set of six high level, overarching student learning outcomes applicable to the Associate degree. There is a desirable element of overlap with general education criteria, but the Associate degree student learning outcomes are distinguished as being more global and non-discipline specific. Next steps include pilot projects and assessment of the results of the pilots.

The Plans of Action for this section acknowledge that Mesa's instructional program is sound and provides excellent education for students at all levels. The College needs to move toward institutional adoption of student learning outcomes and assessment and continue its quest to incorporate statistical data and evidence into decision-making for the instructional program.

Part B, Student Support Services provides an extensive range of support for all students. Mesa's Student Services division has a comprehensive strategic plan and annual goals, a matriculation plan and a new 3-year student services program review process. In a collaborative process with instruction, Student Services has adopted the same Associate degree student learning outcomes and a rubric to identify how these might be assessed for each area. Three longitudinal student success research projects are underway to measure: 1) the effect of enrollment on the success and retention of freshmen in a summer Personal Growth class; 2) the success and retention for the STAR program; and 3) the success and retention for students in the Mesa Academy.

The College supports an extensive co-curricular program and views this as an integral part of the whole educational process. Examples include the Humanities Institute and

Service Learning. Each year the College participates in several major community events in San Diego such as the AIDS Walk and the Martin Luther King Day Parade. Several major College-wide events occur such as the Asian Pacific Islanders Week and the Brown vs. Board of Education lecture. Implementing the newly adopted student learning outcomes in all areas of student services is a goal for the near future.

Responses to student satisfaction surveys provided information that requires more research. The College hopes to work with the District Office of Institutional Research and Planning to create more detailed surveys to get in-depth feedback on areas of concern.

Part C, Library and Learning Support Services. Since the last accreditation visit, the College's new Learning Resource Center (LRC) has opened. Winning awards for its architectural design, this state-of-the-art building, over 100,000 square feet and four stories, contains the library, audiovisual services, and the Center for Independent Learning (CIL). The facility also houses the High-Tech Lab with adaptive hardware and software, two classrooms for library instruction, group and individual study rooms, audiovisual preview rooms, over 100 computers for student use, and extensive areas and seating for studying. All members of the Mesa College community may access the library's numerous online databases through the LRC website.

Tutoring for the general student population is provided through the Tutorial Center and the newly opened Writing Lab. Serving a large number of students, the Tutorial Center is rapidly outgrowing its space. The Writing Lab is staffed by adjunct faculty and open for a limited number of hours per week. Other specialized tutoring is provided through STAR and the Mesa Academy. The various tutoring services are housed in different areas of the campus and have different reporting relationships. All will be part of the new Academic Skills Center, to be housed in the new Social/Behavioral Sciences building to be constructed with Proposition S monies. This will centralize services and provide coordination between the different labs. The College recognizes that consolidating all tutoring services under one administrator is also necessary to improve services.

Standard Three: Resources

Part A, Human Resources. Hiring criteria for all positions are based on established job descriptions; screening committees include knowledgeable members of the department and an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) representative. Faculty and staff who will be serving on screening committees are encouraged to participate in EEO workshops conducted by the College's Site Compliance Officer. Hiring procedures are carefully followed and work well.

A guide to evaluation and appraisal has been created for each employee group. Evaluation processes for fulltime faculty are well understood and followed consistently. There is some concern about the classified performance review process and instrument

and the College recommends that the District review this in order to improve its usefulness to the evaluatee.

The College systematically assesses the adequacy of human resources and incorporates this information into the institutional planning processes. In the past 2—3 years, budget cuts have forced the College to leave positions vacant in order to balance the budget. There is now a backlog of over sixty vacant faculty positions and seventeen classified positions. The College has a process in place to identify and prioritize positions and, with recently identified funding, has identified faculty positions to fill for the fall 2004 semester. The concern expressed in the last accreditation report about the sufficiency of administrative positions continues to be a concern for the College. New classified and management positions must wait for additional funding.

While the self study acknowledges that progress has been made in achieving greater employee diversity, it notes that the College faculty and staff shows less diversity than in the general San Diego population. Therefore, one of the plans of action is to strive to recruit and hire more employees from diverse backgrounds.

Part B, Physical Resources. Mesa College has just celebrated its 40th anniversary. Most of its buildings are the same age as the College and no longer meet the College's needs. The first modern instructional building, the Learning Resource Center constructed in 1998, established the standard for the reconstruction of the rest of the campus.

In November 2002, the voters passed Proposition S, a \$675 million bond for the construction of new facilities for the San Diego County Community College District. In anticipation, the College embarked on the construction of a new Humanities, Languages and Multicultural Studies building which opened in spring 2003 and was funded with Proposition S monies. The effectiveness of the standards used in this building for classrooms, offices, and technology will be assessed as new buildings are designed, and considerations arising from the adoption of student learning outcomes will be integrated into the designs of the new buildings.

A campus facilities master plan has been developed, approved by the President's Cabinet in March 2004 and by the District Board of Trustees in April 2004. Architects are now working on the plans for the first phases of building which will include a parking structure to alleviate long-term severe parking problems at the College. After many years of negotiation with the San Diego Unified School District, Mesa College has managed to acquire the neighboring Muir School site which will be used for the parking facility.

The Facilities Planning Committee, reporting to the President's Cabinet, is the Mesa College participatory governance committee responsible for development of the campus facilities master plan and for oversight of the planning for the projects. Each school that will occupy a new building has its own building planning committee with members appointed by the Academic Senate.

Part C, Technology Resources Since the last self study, the College has made tremendous strides in acquiring and integrating technology and audiovisual equipment and all fulltime faculty offices are now provided with personal computers. The two newest buildings, the Learning Resource Center and the Humanities, Languages and Multicultural Studies Building, are equipped with state-of-the-art technology.

Technology, including email, is used routinely to conduct the business of the College. Curriculum development employs CurricUNET software. The Mesa website provides a central point for students, faculty, staff and the public to locate information about the College's programs and services. Students can apply, register, and receive grades online. Faculty can obtain rosters, drop students, submit grades, and record their flex obligation online. The District has actively pursued the use of technology to enhance business practices, but the improvements are based on an out-of-date software platform. The District is currently negotiating a contract for new administrative software that will integrate the systems.

Many faculty are integrating technology into their courses. Technology training is offered at several District venues and the College is encouraging faculty to offer more web-based course content.

The Mesa Information Technology Committee (MIT) is the participatory governance committee responsible for campus technology oversight and was charged with creating a Strategic Plan for Technology. The plan will be key to the success of Mesa's technology program by providing a cohesive framework for technology planning.

Part D, Financial Resources describes the relationship of Mesa's financial planning to its strategic planning and goals. Financial planning begins at the District level where the College is given an allocation for the next academic year. Recommendations for the College budget are brought to the President's Cabinet for approval. Such recommendations include the College's general fund budget, the purchases to be made with IELM funds, and staffing recommendations.

State budget reductions have caused severe reductions for each of the past two years in the Mesa College budget. The College's first priority is to maintain high quality programs and services and reductions have been made with this in mind. However, to deal with the reductions, the College had to institute hiring freezes, reduce non-instructional accounts, and cancel or not offer class sections. Many believe that these reductions cannot be continued or quality will be compromised.

This standard recommends that the College develop long-term fiscal commitments to retention programs and also develop a financial plan, in conjunction with the District, to fill vacant positions and address other funding shortages.

Standard Four: Leadership and Governance

Part A, Decision-Making Roles and Processes describes the College's participatory governance structures and processes. The President's Cabinet serves as the main participatory governance body with membership from faculty, classified staff, students, and administration.

The participatory governance structure is well understood and most members of the College agree that it provides a vehicle for broad participation and input into decision-making. Encouraging broader participation in governance by students is an important goal for the College. To address concerns about workload for supervisors, chairs, and managers, the self study recommends a District plan to equalize workload ratios for the colleges, with consideration given to the different missions of each institution.

Part B, Board and Administrative Organization describes first the role of the Board and its function of policy-making for the District. The Board schedules twice monthly meetings at its Mission Valley location, with one meeting a year at each of the College sites. Meetings are well planned, productive, and demonstrate the seriousness and commitment with which members of the Board approach their responsibilities. The Board understands the different strengths, needs and challenges of each college and displays knowledge of Mesa's comprehensive curriculum, greater options for students, and the greater transfer function of this College.

Responding to concerns about District morale, in fall 2002 the Board commissioned an Employee Opinion Survey. The findings were studied by the Board and by the College through its participatory governance structure and used to make improvements in areas such as communication.

The Board has recognized the need for a comprehensive master plan for the entire District, and has established a committee that is working to develop a framework for strategic planning. Also recommended is the implementation of the recently revised Board code of ethics and self-evaluation tool.

Part B.2, Role of College President in Leadership and Governance describes the leadership provided by the President. The President leads the College's participatory governance group in dialogue about all aspects of College life. Her initial focus was on governance, planning, and the efficient management of resources. As these principles were successfully implemented, her principles expanded to incorporate the themes of student learning outcomes, leadership for students, and comprehensive educational experiences provided by the instructional/co-curricular programs and services. The President's leadership has also focused on maintaining high quality educational programs in spite of some very lean budget years. Whenever funding permitted, the President has made faculty hiring a top priority. She has led the development of several new programs and plays a key role in developing the physical facilities of the College. Major contributions to the College's facilities that may be attributed to the President's

leadership include the construction of the LRC building, the Humanities building, and the acquisition of the Muir School site.

The President has provided excellent leadership to Mesa College in the eleven years of her tenure. She has been the catalyst for wide-reaching changes that will continue into the future. In her new role as Chancellor of the San Diego Community College District, she will continue to provide leadership and guidance.

Responding to concerns about the difficulty of getting students involved in participatory governance, plans for this section include encouraging students in these endeavors through a variety of means.

Part B.3 Multi-College District/Systems This section describes the role of the Chancellor and the District with respect to the College. There is a clear delineation of role and function between the Colleges and the District. But participatory governance processes are less clear at the District level than at the College. In areas where District-wide collaboration is necessary, some difficulties are experienced because of the lack of clarity. To address this concern, the self study recommends that the District Executive Council, now primarily tasked with review of the Board docket, be given an enhanced role in participatory governance for District-wide issues.

Emphasizing the important place that participatory governance holds in the life of Mesa College, the self study recommends a re-emphasis on the use of such protocols whenever reorganization of District services or personnel occurs and that such reorganizations include plans for the improved allocation of resources.