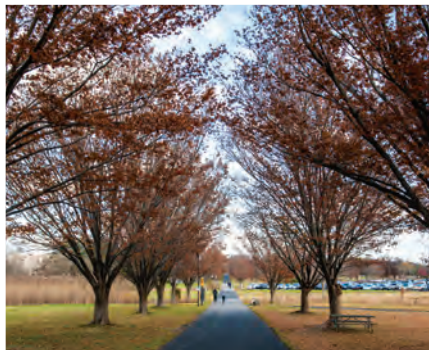


2015  
Self-Study Report



Montgomery County  
Community College



# Certification Statement





## Middle States Commission on Higher Education

3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680

Phone: 267-284-5000 Fax: 215-662-5501 www.msche.org

### Certification Statement: Compliance with MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and Federal Title IV Requirements Effective October 19, 2012

Montgomery County Community College

(Name of Institution)

is seeking (*Check one*):

- ☐ Initial Accreditation  
☒ Reaffirmation of Accreditation through Self Study  
☐ Reaffirmation of Accreditation through Periodic Review

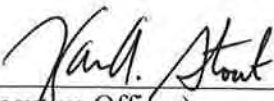
An institution seeking **initial accreditation** or **reaffirmation of accreditation** must affirm that it meets or continues to meet established MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including the following relevant requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008:

- Distance education and correspondence education (student identity verification)
- Transfer of credit
- Assignment of credit hours
- Title IV cohort default rate

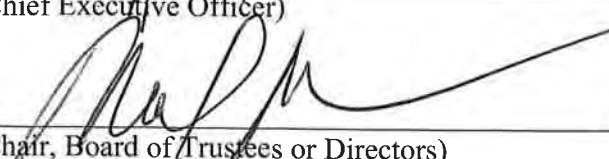
*This signed certification statement must be attached to the executive summary of the institution's self-study or periodic review report.*

The undersigned hereby certify that the institution meets all established Requirements of Affiliation of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation as detailed on this certification statement. If it is not possible to certify compliance with all requirements specified herein, the institution must attach specific details in a separate memorandum.

☐ Exceptions are noted in the attached memorandum (*Check if applicable*)

  
(Chief Executive Officer)

1/19/2015  
(Date)

  
(Chair, Board of Trustees or Directors)

1/20/2015  
(Date)

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# Executive Summary

## Executive Summary

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### Overview by Standard

An overview of each Working Group's findings, organized according to the fourteen Characteristics of Excellence, appears below. The one-paragraph summary for each standard comprises three parts. The first part notes an exemplary area of achievement for Montgomery County Community College ("the College"), as recognized by the Steering Committee, in addressing a difficult problem in higher education. The second part of each overview highlights additional areas of strength. In the third section, and in boldface type, are listed each Working Group's findings of opportunities for growth, from which the Steering Committee formulated its Self-Study suggestions.

#### Standard 1: Mission and Goals

Working Group 1 noted particular achievement in measuring the College's mission through the development of **Critical Success Factors (CSFs)**. The widespread use of CSFs, along with associated metrics against which to benchmark mission achievement, not only demonstrates the College's commitment to outcomes-based accountability but also addresses the national conversation around mission assessment. Working Group 1 found that the process of developing the mission statement and strategic plan is collaborative in nature. Opportunities were provided to faculty, staff and administrators to be involved in the plenary process; as well, the mission statement and strategic plan are widely available and distributed to many constituencies. Working Group 1 found the College's use of the six cascading strategic goals to be an organizational strength. Moreover, the Group found that the College consistently measures its mission against strategic goals at all levels, in all units, and across all faculty and staff. Suggestions for improvement in this area focused on keeping track of ideas for future changes and clarifying the relationship between the newly implemented Core curriculum and the College's mission and vision statements. **Working Group 1 suggested that the College consider strategies for documenting ongoing discussions about mission review and build the results of those discussions into its long-term strategic planning process (Suggestion 1.a). In addition, the Working Group found that the College should further describe how its Core goals evolve from its mission, values, and strategic planning statements (Suggestion 1.b).**

#### Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Working Group 2 found that clarity of focus characterizes the outcomes-based planning and resource allocation process at the College. In particular, the Working Group highlighted excellence in the Academic Affairs Strategic Planning Process, which integrates high-level curriculum planning and employer needs with data-driven program assessment, budgeting priorities, and faculty input. Working Group 2 also noted that the College employs a very collaborative process to arrive at a comprehensive plan to support long- and short-term goals with limited resources. All stakeholders are engaged. Working Group 2 listed newly developed strengths of the College, including the addition of a broader range of financial and curricular

assumptions as part of the allocation process, the development of metrics-driven planning, and the widespread use of **Decision Support Systems (DSS)**. The Working Group did note two specific opportunities for improvement. **The Group suggested that the College continue to optimize its resource allocation methodologies, particularly those that advance innovation (Suggestion 2.a).** In addition, the Working Group noted that access to data for planning and renewal had been contained in the past and suggested that **the College provide greater access to data, as relevant and appropriate to an individual's position, and provide training in data analysis as needed (Suggestion 2.b).** Ease of access will alleviate the reporting burden on both the Office of Institutional Research and Information Technology while enhancing the effective use of data analysis throughout the College.

### Standard 3: Institutional Resources

One of the best examples of the responsible use of institutional resources at the College since the 2010 **Periodic Review Report (PRR)** has to be the success of its campus renovation and renewal. The College's buildings at its Central Campus dated from the late 1960s, and its facilities at both Campuses needed upgrading in order to meet the strategic goal of creating "a sense of place to support learning." The Working Group noted that the construction of two new buildings, the renovation of seven, and the addition of a new facility for the **Culinary Arts Institute** have dramatically improved the College's ability to achieve its mission. Working Group 2 then affirmed the financial stability and integrity of the College and its success in containing costs and allocating resources in an uncertain budget environment. Strong resource allocation processes, which are closely aligned with the College's six strategic goals, enable the College to support mission-centric activities amid changing economic circumstances. The budget process demonstrates the careful development of assumptions, the collaborative nature of the College's decision-making and planning processes, and its ongoing cost-containment strategies to ensure long-term financial stability. The Working Group also praised the College's commitment to sustainable use of resources, its robust IT infrastructure and support, and new success in obtaining grant funding for targeted initiatives. Working Group 2, however, did note that the College's forecasting capability needs additional improvement. While individual areas within the budget are projected out for multiple years, a comprehensive approach to multi-year planning is still needed in some areas as the College responds to external changes. **The Working Group suggests that the Finance and Administration unit should continue to refine its planning processes to allow for nimble long-term forecasting, particularly in the areas of position management and deferred maintenance (Suggestion 3).**

### Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

Working Group 3 confirmed the Board of Trustees' appropriate involvement in the College's institutional initiatives, programs, and events; the Group found the Board effective in planning, evolving, and advancing the College's mission and strategic goals. The Group noted the Board's commitment to its role as advocate for the College in the series of strategies it supported to enhance legislative support for the College within the Montgomery County community. These strategies provided a framework for the Board to lobby Commonwealth and County representatives to fund the mission of the College in an ongoing and unified way. In particular, Working Group 3 found that, since the 2010 PRR, significant improvements have made the College's financial governance processes stronger, and these reflect the Board's ongoing oversight and the integrity of its governance. Finally, the Working Group noted that

changes in shared governance at the College, including the more robust description of agenda items and new governance updates at general faculty meetings, among others, have helped the College improve the clarity, order, and transparency of its governance process. The Working Group suggested, however, that more timely communication and collaboration during the shared governance process might be achieved. **The College should ensure that new initiatives and policy revisions are undertaken within timeframes that allow faculty, students, support staff, and administrators to communicate and collaborate in an effective manner (Suggestion 4).**

### Standard 5: Administration

Working Group 3 highlighted the participation by the College's administrative leadership in the national dialogue on college readiness and President Stout's invitation to attend the White House College Opportunity Summit; as well, the Group noted the work of College's administration in fostering its **Student Success Initiative** and on being named an Achieving the Dream Leader College in 2011 (recertified in 2014). Working Group 3 then affirmed that the administration's operational and strategic decisions are consistent with College policies, procedures, and legal requirements, and that this consistency is an ongoing strength of the College. Changes within the College's administrative structure since the 2010 PRR evidence the College's ongoing assessment of its effectiveness. The Working Group also noted that the College's new **Performance Management Process (PMP)**, implemented in 2013-14, helps closely align the administrative staff's individual duties and responsibilities with the College's mission and strategic goals. The Group also found many mechanisms in place for the personal development and educational growth of the administrative and support staff. Although the College has a clearly defined organizational structure in place across all units, Working Group 3 did raise concerns about administrative continuity. The Working Group found that some members of the College community worry about the continuity of various initiatives at the College; a shared plan to coordinate these initiatives across the College may help ease anxieties about an initiative's completion if a key member of the team leaves or is re-assigned. Working Group 3 also observed that the College could develop stronger planning and communication mechanisms to ensure continuity. Overall, Working Group 3 suggested that **the College should strengthen processes that support administrative continuity and institutional knowledge management, including those that document current practices and systematize the way transitions are handled (Suggestion 5).**

### Standard 6: Integrity

Working Group 1 affirmed that integrity is a foundational value at the College and highlighted the work of the Office of Equity and Diversity Initiatives in promoting Title IX education. The Group noted that integrity serves as guiding principle in all of the College's operations, thereby reflecting a commitment to academic quality, a learner-centered environment, diversity, and honesty. The Working Group found no opportunities for improvement in this area.

### Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

As one of the 40 original pilot colleges to test the institutional metrics and data definitions put forward by the American Association of Community Colleges' **Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA)**, Montgomery County Community College (MCCC)

collects institutional assessment data that portray a compelling and aggregate description of student progress. VFA metrics better represent the diversity of two-year students' educational experiences and help rebut invalid comparisons of community colleges with selective and four-year colleges and universities. Working Group 4 affirmed that extensive and widespread assessment occurs at all levels of the College and that the results of assessment are used to inform change and planning throughout the College. Indeed, the Group found that assessment activities have increased significantly since the 2010 PRR. The **Institutional Effectiveness Model (IEM)** helps facilitate the discussion on how well the College achieves its goals and mission. Student success indicators, as well as other metrics, have helped the College determine where to focus its resources and planning efforts, with comparisons to past years and to peer institutions. Effectiveness, therefore, defined as the successful implementation of the College's mission, is part of the culture and fabric of the College. Working Group 4 found, however, a need for additional communication concerning how institutional assessment relates to what individuals do on a daily basis. Communication about how the IEM relates to individual performance will be important for the College going forward. The Working Group also concluded that sharing accessible, succinct, and easily interpretable data helps make institutional assessment relevant to individuals. **Working Group 4 suggested that the College enhance its communication processes in order to make assessment data easier to locate and retrieve, easier to interpret, and more widely available, as appropriate (Suggestion 7).**

## **Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention**

Working Group 5 noted the College's outstanding achievement in supporting and promoting student success through the creation of a culture of evidence, its continuous improvement, its systemic institutional change, and its broad engagement of stakeholders – for which it was recognized with the **Leah Meyer Austin Award** in 2014. In addition, the Working Group found strength in the College's new open-source financial education programs, in recent policy updates that clarify transfer of credit, and in the development of an integrated enrollment services pathway. The Group noted that predicting and managing student enrollment and persistence from semester-to-semester is particularly challenging. While the College anticipates that a new, five-year Enrollment Management plan, developed in Spring 2014, will enhance student persistence and retention, **the Working Group saw an opportunity for the College to not only assess the success of its five-year Enrollment Management Plan but to evaluate its ability to improve the prediction and management of student enrollment and persistence (Suggestion 8.a).** In examining the variety of new initiatives around student success, the Working Group saw an opportunity for **the College to continue to strengthen student readiness, progression, and completion strategies by consolidating cohort assessment across various student interventions (Suggestion 8.b).**

## **Standard 9: Student Support Services**

Working Group 5 highlighted the College's achievement in Advising Redesign. Student Affairs and Enrollment Management modeled this redesign on best practices in advising and emerging ideas about student completion by design. Supported by technology tools and the implementation of an Integrated Planning and Advising Support system grant through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Advising Redesign provides students with more than traditional advice about program, course scheduling, and transfer opportunities. Working Group 5 also affirmed that the College's student support services reflect the needs of the student



population and sustain students' educational goals on an academic and on a personal level. The Working Group found particular evidence of strength and renewal in the recent revision of the College's student orientation, enrollment and advising system. Coincident with the Advising Redesign, moreover, the Student Affairs and Enrollment Management updated its Student Advising Learning Outcomes. Measurement of the new outcomes is ongoing. **Since the advising redesign is so new, Working Group 5 suggested that College continue to evaluate its effectiveness going forward (Suggestion 9.a).** Working Group 5 found one other opportunity for improvement. While the Career Services Office provides a variety of career and job search counseling and coaching services, students report inconsistent knowledge of these opportunities; moreover, the use of some of these services and software tools is quite low. **The Working Group suggested that Student Affairs and Enrollment Management create a more robust Career Services office to help students with experiential learning, internships, and career pathways (Suggestion 9.b).**

### Standard 10: Faculty

Working Group 6 found that the College emphasized the importance of its students in all of its discussions of faculty effectiveness. The Group pointed out that the College regularly assesses its policies and procedures with regard to faculty evaluation, as evidenced by the work of the Faculty Evaluation Task Force. The Group also affirmed that the research and scholarly interests of many members of the faculty are directed towards improving teaching and promoting student learning. Working Group 6 was charged particularly with looking at the ways in which part-time faculty are engaged in the life of the College; they found that the College has continued its efforts to engage part-time faculty members in the intellectual, educational, and social activities of their disciplines, units, and the College as a whole. Although the College has made a concerted effort to achieve the appropriate ratio of full-time to part-time faculty members, it does not reach this goal in some divisions every semester. **Working Group 6 suggests that the College continue to monitor the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty and prioritize full-time hiring, as appropriate, to maintain this ratio (Suggestion 10.a).** The College has a strong system of faculty participation in governance, one that requires many hours of committee service from the faculty. Working Group 6 found, however, that such committee service is sometimes distributed unevenly and observed that **the Deans of the academic divisions should strive for an equitable process when determining faculty committee service, particularly for that service that is appointed and not elected. Faculty leaders should also support processes that ensure that all full-time faculty members in each division share service (Suggestion 10.b).** While the Faculty Evaluation Task Force has recommended many improvements to the established evaluation process, the Working Group advised that the College should look carefully at the connection between its professional development offerings and student success and suggested **that the College determine whether and how professional development offerings for faculty members contribute to student success (Suggestion 10.c).** Finally, the Working Group found that while Faculty Diversity Fellow program has been successful, a relatively low number (11%) of faculty members identify themselves as members of a minority group. **Working Group 6 recommended that the College explore the feasibility of expanding the program and creating additional measures to increase diversity in the faculty hiring, promotion, and evaluation process (Suggestion 10.d).**

## Standard 11: Educational Offerings

The College's transfer opportunities have always been a strength, but recent curricular revisions made in response to statewide requirements have positively affected the transferability of College programs and courses. The Working Group noted that the College's immediate response to the **Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee (TAOC)** mandates at the State-level has resulted in 40 new articulation agreements, twenty-one of which are with non-**Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE)** institutions. Working Group 7 also affirmed that the College meets changing student academic and career needs through continued review and renewal of program offerings. In particular, the Working Group noted a recent emphasis on Academic Affairs renewal. Since the 2010 PRR, 63 degree or certificate programs have been reviewed, leading to new additions to, modifications of, or deletions from the College's portfolio of programs. During the same period, the faculty have reviewed the learning outcomes of 990 courses, inactivating 130 courses for alignment reasons while proposing 204 modifications to course outcomes. While Working Group 7 found that a complex and multi-step process is used to determine how, when, and where courses and programs are offered, **in response to student feedback, the Group suggested that the College supplement its process for determining course offerings by implementing systematic methods for capturing student input. The College should then use this information to inform scheduling (Suggestion 11.a).** The Group also found that the College maintains agreements with a number of partner schools where the graduation rate of former MCCC students is quite low; these partners include many for-profit institutions. **The Group suggested that the College form strategic relationships with those partners that have shown a consistent pattern of successful transfer, including degree completion, for MCCC students (Suggestion 11.b).**

## Standard 12: General Education (Core)

Working Group 8 found the implementation of a single General Education **Core** for *both* workforce and transfer degrees an area of strength for the College and a departure from the approach to General Education common at community colleges. The new Core represents a shift in pedagogical approach, one that moves away from viewing general education requirements as a set series of courses and towards viewing general education as the mastery of specific competencies. The Working Group affirmed that implementation of the new Core has been communicated to the College and that both faculty and administration have worked together to establish a manageable Core approval process through shared governance. Group 8 did note multiple discussions on campus about the compatibility of the Commonwealth's new statewide framework and the College's Core requirements. **The Group suggested that the College continue to measure the impact of both the General Education Core and State transfer requirements on program and course registration, student persistence, transferability, and student success and make ongoing revisions, as needed (Suggestion 12.a).** In addition, the Group recognized that process of performing Core assessment has highlighted the need for ongoing revisions to the Core, particularly to the language of the Core goals and the methodology for evaluating Core outcomes. **Working Group 8 suggested that the Curriculum Committee review each Core goal to clarify language, assist Core assessment, and evaluate the efficacy of the entire Core, making revisions, as needed, based on outcomes data, program needs, and faculty feedback (Suggestion 12.b).**

### Standard 13: Distance Education and Related Educational Activities

Working Group 9 affirmed that, since the 2005 Self-Study, the College has extended its geographical reach in order to meet the needs of a diverse County in a responsible way. The Group commended the renewed emphasis on quality and the expansion of the College's online offerings through its **Virtual Campus Initiative**; it also noted the College's outreach to lifelong learners through the **University Center**. Group 9 found that the College's revised certificate programs strengthened its educational mission, as these revised certifications "stack" into degree pathways and allow students to apply some or all of those credits towards a degree program. Finally, and uniquely to MCCC, the Working Group affirmed the importance of the College's Cultural Affairs Office to its mission. **Working Group 9 did note an opportunity for better parity in student services and resources across campuses and locations (Suggestion 13.a);** the strategies suggested by the Group include increasing the availability of online forms and processes, expanding opportunities for online student life, and ensuring equity in face-to-face and online proctoring. Finally, given the centrality the Cultural Affairs Office to the mission of the College, the Group suggested that the College should work to spread awareness of these and other resources and should **find additional platforms to raise County and community awareness of its range of facilities and its breadth of cultural offerings (Suggestion 13.b).**

### Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

Working Group 10 highlighted the work of the College, an assessment leader among its regional peers, to model best practices surrounding the assessment of student learning. The Working Group recognized that faculty and staff consider assessment an integrative process that involves mastery of course outcomes, student progression through the General Education Core, and, finally, success in a specific program of study. At the course level, Working Group 10 affirmed that the College offers transparent and clearly articulated statements of student-learning outcomes; expectations for institutional benchmarks are set through the College's General Education or Core goals and their assessment plans. In particular, Working Group 10 found that the College's program-level assessment processes, structures, and reporting are very strong. The Group also affirmed that the College continually uses student learning assessment data to improve student learning and support institutional change. Working Group 10 concluded, however, that a distributed approach to both Core and course assessment, while important for providing initial opportunities for the collection of baseline data and for acclimating the faculty to assessment practices, has resulted in a lack of clear lines of responsibility for assessment data collection. **Working Group 10 suggests that the College, using as a model the best practices it has established in program-level assessment, should continue to refine the process it uses for the assessment of Core- and course-level student learning outcomes (Suggestion 14.a).** Overall, Working Group 10 suggests that the College needs to manage concerns about assessment to ensure that all stakeholders are conducting assessment effectively. In particular, communication about the assessment process should be strengthened (Suggestion 14.b).

# Introduction

## Introduction

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### Institutional Profile

Montgomery County Community College (the College), founded in 1964, serves the third-largest county in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as an open-access institution. Currently, the College offers 55 associate degrees and 40 certificate programs in 62 discipline areas, as well as a range of continuing education, personal enrichment, and specialized workforce development courses. During 2013-2014, the College served 20,250 unduplicated credit and 3,907 non-credit students for a total of 24,157 students in day, evening, weekend, and distance education classes.

During the fall 2014 semester, 66% percent of credit students attended on a part-time basis. Forty-eight percent of all students who take classes for credit are enrolled in a transfer-related program, while 33% are enrolled in programs with career-based objectives; the remaining 19% are General Studies or non-degree-seeking students. Ethnic and racial minorities comprise approximately 28% of the students who take courses for credit, and close to 57% of those students are female. The average age of a Montgomery County Community College student is 25. The College has over 61,482 alumni.

Over the past decade, the College has extended its geographical reach to meet the educational needs of the residents of this large and diverse county, which includes suburban residential communities in proximity to Philadelphia County, large farms in its northern and western sections, and several small urban centers. The College has two campuses, the **Central Campus**, located in Blue Bell, twenty-five miles northwest of Philadelphia on the Route 202 technology and industrial corridor, and the **West Campus**, located in Pottstown at the converging borders of Berks, Chester, and Montgomery Counties, as well as the following additional locations: the Montgomery County Public Training Program in Conshohocken, the Transportation Security Administration at the Philadelphia Airport, and, the College's newest facility, **the Culinary Arts Institute (CAI)** in Towamencin. Moreover, the College offers classes at 19 instructional sites throughout the County.

A new **Virtual Campus** initiative, launched in 2013, expands, aggregates, and improves the College's long-standing distance education programs. The Virtual Campus ensures that online students have access to the College's resources, courses, and select areas of study. The College has also partnered with a number of colleges and universities through its **University Center** initiative, which provides Montgomery County Community College graduates and the greater community with the opportunity to transfer seamlessly into multiple bachelor's degree programs, three master's degree programs, and two doctoral degree programs, all conveniently offered at the College's West and Central Campuses.

Local and regional employers consistently look to the College to help them meet evolving workforce training needs. The College's **Center for Workforce Development** has maintained and managed over \$10 million in grants and has assisted more than 400 local



companies during the past decade. In addition, the College participates in JobTrakPA, a state initiative that provides critical training to high-demand industries. In August 2010, the College opened a **Center for Entrepreneurial Studies** to support emerging entrepreneurs and small businesses in the County.

The College has become a significant hub of cultural and recreational enrichment in the county. For example, through the College's **Lively Arts Series**, over 10,000 members of the community annually attend music, dance, and theatre performances. The Art Gallery at the West Campus in Pottstown and its complement at the Central Campus in Blue Bell offer community members a place to view and appreciate artistic works while providing an opportunity to showcase their own work. Recently, the College has been a driving force in the development and launch of **Creative MontCo**, a civic initiative that strives to shape the county's cultural and economic future.

A fifteen-person Board of Trustees (the Board), members of which are appointed by the Montgomery County Commissioners to six-year, renewable terms, governs the College. The Board is a policy-governing body, focusing its decision making on achieving results that advance the core mission of the College. The Board sets policies that affect student access, curriculum, and the administration of the College, including approving and monitoring an annual operating and capital budget, setting tuition and fees, and hiring and evaluating the President. The Board has oversight responsibilities for buildings, equipment, and furnishings with approval authority for renting, selling, or improving the property, as well as approving contracts with outside vendors doing business with the College. The Board meets monthly from September to June. In addition, the Board utilizes a committee structure to consider issues in areas around Finance/Audit, Physical Plant, Curriculum, and Personnel.

## **Mission Statement and Related Values**

In 2011, as part of a "Mission and Vision Fest" led by President Karen A. Stout during the 2011-2016 strategic planning process, the College discussed and re-affirmed its current mission:

*Montgomery County Community College is a place where the future is created, a place where desire and knowledge are combined to yield opportunity. The College is a reflection and a response to the needs and aspirations of those who live, work, and conduct business in Montgomery County and beyond. Grounded in a set of values that teach us to encourage, listen, respect, and treat fairly those whom we serve, those with whom we work, and those who work with us in service, the College strives to ensure that all residents of Montgomery County have access to the highest quality and most affordable higher education possible. Most importantly, the College is dedicated to fostering the growth and success of all we serve.*

*The College believes that learning is a lifelong activity requiring constant adaptation of programs, courses, and learning support services to reflect social, technological, and workforce changes and to ensure that all learners reach their unique goals. Believing in the right of everyone to have access to a quality education, to*

*workforce training, to opportunities for personal and professional growth, and to culture and recreation, the College translates the values of its community and reaches out to it, inviting involvement, offering learning, and fostering understanding.*

The students, faculty, support staff, administration, and the Board uphold the following values in support of this Mission statement:

- Learning
- Accessible and affordable educational opportunity
- Quality programs and performance
- Fairness and equity
- Individual worth
- Community service

These values derive from the Mission and are evidenced in the College's current operations and its strategic planning for the future.

## **The Self-Study Process**

Since December of 2012, Montgomery County Community College has been immersed in its decennial self-study process. Upon the successful acceptance of its self-study design document in June 2013 by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), ten working groups, comprised of more than 120 faculty members, administrators, students, and staff, met bi-monthly to answer the research questions posed in the design document. They gathered evidence, discussed findings, and assembled preliminary reports. At the same time, the forty-member Steering Committee met regularly throughout AY13-14 to discuss and resolve open issues and ensure input from the administrative leadership. A draft of the Self-Study Report was presented to the Board of Trustees Curriculum Committee in September 2014 and was posted for public comment on the College's external website during Fall 2014. The entire College community, including the Student Government Association, discussed the draft at various **Open Fora** scheduled during late September through mid-October. The Self-Study progressed through the All-College governance structure, the **President's Leadership Cabinet**, and the full Board of Trustees before being submitted to **MSCHE** in January 2015.

## **Self-Study Outcomes**

The Steering Committee affirms the outcomes of the Self-Study process, as designated in the Self-Study design, were met. The Self-Study Report:

1. Established the College's compliance with the Fourteen Characteristics of Excellence.
2. Engaged the College community in a process of community-wide reflection and self-evaluation.
3. Evaluated the College's progress towards the accomplishment of its mission, values, and strategic plan.
4. Examined the effectiveness of the College's assessment processes.
5. Identified areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.
6. Systematically communicated its processes and findings during the past three years.

7. Will employ its findings to inform the College's 2016-2021 strategic plan.

## Self-Study Themes

During the vetting of the Working Group reports, the Steering Committee identified the following themes in the findings and suggestions put forward by all Working Groups.

- Theme 1. Student Success and Academic Excellence Supported by Data-Driven Assessment (Suggestions 7.a, 8.b, 9.b, 10.a, 10.c, 11.b, 12.a, 12.c)
- Theme 2. Collaboration and Communication (Suggestions 4.a, 11.a, 13.b, 14.b)
- Theme 3. Continuous Institutional Renewal (Suggestions 1.a, 2.a, 2.b, 3.a, 8.a, 9.a)
- Theme 4. College Values (Suggestions 1.b, 5.a, 10.b, 10.d, 13.a, 14.a)

An illustration of the Self-Study suggestions organized by theme appears at the end of this Introduction as Figure Intro.1. The themes are also noted throughout the Self-Study report following each suggestion. These themes will be referenced in the 2016-2021 Strategic Planning Process.

## Organization of the Self-Study

### Part I: Self-Study Report

The Self-Study Report takes a comprehensive approach to its design, with one chapter dedicated to each of the Fourteen Characteristics of Excellence. Within each chapter, the organization is as follows:

- First, a section titled “**Thinking Big**” presents a case study about one of the College’s significant achievements related to the Standard being discussed. Each case study highlights the College’s response to a difficult issue facing community colleges and higher education today.
- Next, the **Background** section reviews the Colleges compliance with Fundamental Elements and gives information about the structure and operations of the College. References to Fundamental Elements are indicated in boldface, followed by parentheses, to illustrate the College’s compliance with the Middle States Commission’s standards. Parenthetical references to the Fundamental Elements follow the order listed in Characteristics of Excellence. For example, “**1FE1**” refers to the first Fundamental Element under Standard 1.
- The section titled **Methodology** recaps the research questions from the Self-Study design and details the charges of each of the ten Working Groups.



- The **Findings** section is divided into two – strengths and opportunities – which each relate the items highlighted by the Working Group.
- Finally, the **Suggestions** section summarizes the opportunities for improvement, places those suggestions categories or “themes” for strategic planning.
- Immediately following the discussions of the 14 Standards follows the **Proposed Work Plan**. The Work Plan is organized by Suggestion and shows the steps the College has already taken to address issues raised in the initial Working Group findings in Spring 2014. The names of the offices responsible for action items and a timeline for completion appear as part of the Work Plan.
- **Glossary** terms are indicated throughout by **orange boldface type**. A Glossary follows the Work Plan.
- The Self-Study report includes (in a separate binder) **Appendices** that provide selected documentary evidence for each chapter. Complete documentary evidence may be found in **Accreditation Readiness Report**, often called the “document roadmap, which is also provided in a separate binder.

## Part II: Accreditation Readiness Report (“Document Roadmap”)

The Accreditation Readiness Report assembles evidence of compliance with the Fundamental Elements; this list of evidence accompanies the Self-Study Report and Appendices in a separate binder. The Accreditation Readiness Report provides the team with a crosswalk of fundamental elements to specific documentary evidence. This evidence may be examined onsite in the Reading Rooms at both campuses, as well as viewed online through an intranet portal available to the evaluation team immediately before and during the team visit.

## Part III: Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations

As required, the third part of the Self-Study follows the MSCHE template for the verification of compliance with accreditation-relevant Federal Regulations and is provided electronically to the evaluation team and in hard copy to the Team Chair. The Verification of Compliance was submitted to electronically to MSCHE on January 8, 2015. Specifically, the volume contains documentation regarding:

- Student identity verification in distance and correspondence education
- Transfer of credit policies and articulation agreements
- Title IV program responsibilities
- Assignment of credit hours

All of these materials are provided on the USB drive that accompanies the Self-Study Report and Appendices.

## Suggestions Organized by Theme

<p><b>Student Success and Academic Excellence Supported by Data-Driven Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. The College should enhance its communication processes in order to make assessment data easier to locate and retrieve, easier to interpret, and more widely available, as appropriate.</li> <li>8.b. The College should continue to strengthen student readiness, progression, and completion strategies by consolidating cohort assessment across various student interventions.</li> <li>9.b. Student Affairs and Enrollment Management should create a more robust Career Services office to help students with experiential learning, internships, and career pathways.</li> <li>10.a The College should continue to monitor the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty and prioritize full-time hiring, as appropriate, to maintain this ratio.</li> <li>10.c. The College should determine whether and how professional development offerings for faculty members contribute to student success.</li> <li>11.b. The College should form strategic relationships with those partners that have shown a consistent pattern of successful transfer, including degree completion, for MCCC students.</li> <li>12.a. The College should gauge the impact of both the General Education Core and state transfer requirements on program and course registration, student persistence, transferability, and student success and make revisions, as needed.</li> <li>12.b. The Curriculum Committee should review each Core goal to clarify language, assist Core assessment, and evaluate the efficacy of the entire Core, making revisions, as needed, based on outcomes data, program needs, and faculty feedback.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Collaboration and Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. The College should ensure that new initiatives and policy revisions are undertaken within timeframes that allow faculty, students, support staff, and administrators to communicate and collaborate in an effective manner.</li> <li>11.a. The College should supplement its process for determining course offerings by implementing systematic methods for capturing student input. The College should then use this information to inform scheduling (that is, what, where, when, and how courses are offered).</li> <li>13.b The College should find additional platforms to raise County and community awareness of its range of facilities and its breadth of cultural offerings.</li> <li>14.b The College needs to manage concerns about assessment to ensure that all stakeholders are conducting assessment effectively. In particular, communication of the assessment process should be strengthened.</li> </ul>
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Continuous Institutional Renewal	College Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.a The College should consider strategies for documenting ongoing discussions about mission review and build the results of those discussions into its long-term strategic planning process.</li> <li>2.a. The College should continue to optimize its resource allocation methodologies, particularly those that advance innovation.</li> <li>2.b. The College should provide greater access to data, as relevant and appropriate to an individual's position, and provide training in data analysis, as needed.</li> <li>3. The Finance and Administration unit should continue to refine its planning processes to allow for nimble long-term forecasting, particularly in the areas of position management and deferred maintenance.</li> <li>8.a. The College should assess the success of its new comprehensive Enrollment Management Plan and evaluate its ability to improve the prediction and management student enrollment and persistence.</li> <li>9.a. The College should continue to evaluate the effectiveness of its new Advising Redesign.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.b. The College should further describe how its Core goals evolve from its mission, values, and strategic planning statements.</li> <li>5. The College should strengthen processes that support administrative continuity and institutional knowledge management, including those that document current practices and that systematize the way transitions are handled.</li> <li>10.b. The Deans of the academic divisions should strive for an equitable process when determining faculty committee service, particularly for that service that is appointed and not elected. Faculty leaders should also support processes that ensure that all full-time faculty members in each division share service.</li> <li>10.d. While the Faculty Diversity Fellow program has been successful, the College should explore the feasibility of expanding the program and creating additional measures to increase diversity in the faculty hiring, promotion, and evaluation process.</li> <li>13.a The College should strive to ensure parity in advising, technology, student life, student services and course offerings across campuses and locations.</li> <li>14.a The College, using as a model the best practices it has established in program-level assessment, should continue to refine the process it uses for the assessment of Core- and course-level student learning outcomes</li> </ul>

*Figure Intro.1: Self-Study Suggestions Organized by Theme. Above find the Self-Study suggestions categorized into four themes, which will be used during the 2016-2021 Strategic Planning Process.*



# Standard 1: Mission and Goals

## Standard 1: Mission and Goals



### Measuring Mission Achievement Demonstrates Accountability

The national conversation around accountability in higher education requires not just the communication of the mission statement, but also the ongoing measurement of mission achievement. So while banners announcing the College's mission decorate the College and the College's mission statement appears in the course catalogue, student handbook, faculty handbook, alumni magazine, and the website, MCCC has done more. The College has addressed the national call for an outcomes-based assessment by using **Critical Success Factors (CSFs)** to benchmark progress against the six strategic goals that support its mission. Each year during an annual retreat, the College's administrative leadership develops CSFs that derive from the six strategic goals and that the College is able to implement in support of its mission. The CSFs are next transformed into statements with measurable outcomes and tied to one or more of its six College units: Finance and Administration, Academic Affairs, Information Technology and College Services, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, West Campus, and Development and External Relations. Then the goals cascade downwards into the job goals and responsibilities of each administrative employee. Finally, the outcomes are benchmarked against mission achievement using metrics devised by the leadership team and reported out at the Administrative Staff meetings quarterly.

For example, the College's mission statement highlights its emphasis on student access and success: "Montgomery County Community College is a place where the future is created, a place where desire and knowledge are combined to yield opportunity . . . . [T]he College strives to ensure that all residents of Montgomery County have access to the highest quality and most affordable higher education possible. Most importantly, the College is dedicated to fostering the growth and success of all we serve"

(Figure 1.1). (The full text of the mission statement appears as Appendix 1.1). To support this mission, the College's first of six goals in its 2011 – 2016 Strategic Plan reads as follows:



Figure 1.1: Mission Banner. Colorful banners communicate the mission to the community, but outcomes-based metrics also measure mission achievement on a quarterly basis.

### **Strategic Goal 1: INCREASE STUDENT ACCESS AND SUCCESS**

Develop multiple pathways for entry to reduce barriers to enrollment, ensure seamless student transitions (from high school to college, from non-credit to credit, from college to transfer, from college to career, from career to college) and improve student academic achievement and goal attainment.

After an annual retreat to kick-off AY13-14, the College's leadership crafted the following CSFs for achieving that strategic goal.

#### **Critical Success Factors**

1. Increase the reach of the College into underserved markets and deepen overall enrollment penetration rates.
2. Design student support services to support student transitions from entry to progression to completion and to transition into employment or transfer.
3. **Ensure financial affordability and build financial aid support systems to support and incent the enrollment, progression, and completion of students with financial need.**
4. Build college readiness levels upon entry and accelerate college readiness of current students to support increased progression and completion.

Once the CSFs are set, each Vice President takes responsibility for designing measurable outcomes to support the success factors. For example, Goal 1 CSF 3 reads, "Ensure financial affordability and build financial aid support systems to support and incent the enrollment, progression, and completion of students with financial need." Both the Vice President of Development and External Relations and the Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management took responsibility for that CSF and designed this outcome, complete with metrics to facilitate its measurement:

#### **Measurable Outcomes for Goal 1, CSF 3**

Develop in 13-14 and launch in 14-15 an innovative strategy for using Institutional and Foundation financial aid to support progression and completion goals, and continue the focus on financial literacy support for incoming and continuing students.

##### **Metrics**

- Decline in Deferred Payment Default Rates – 2%
- Decline in Student loan default rates - 2%
- Decrease in Student Loan Burden – 5% (2yr)
- Decrease in De-Registration levels – 1%

At the end of the first quarter, these Vice Presidents updated the College on their progress and reported a decline in deferred payment default rates, in overall default rates, in the two-year student loan burden, and in student deregistration. In addition, the Vice Presidents reported other activity around that goal. For example, in this quarter, the report included an update on how, in support of financial literacy, the College is moving forward with the EDUCAUSE Gates-funded incubator grant, a discussion of how the College worked with the Boys and Girls Club of America to secure a \$10,000 scholarship commitment for Pottstown students, and a note about the College's new default prevention strategies, specifically to assist former students with debt management when they are delinquent, but before they go into default.

As the statement itself notes, the achievement of the mission requires ongoing self-assessment and review. Strategic goals that are consonant with the College's mission, that relate to internal and external contexts and constituencies, and that are measured quarterly ensure that students "have access to the highest quality and most affordable higher education possible." The College works to make its mission, along with the six strategic goals that articulate it through 2016, an organizing principle that all plans and initiatives support.

### Background and Overview

*N.B. Compliance items are indicated in bold and matched with the corresponding Fundamental Element (FE); see the Accreditation Readiness Roadmap for specific documents evidencing that compliance.*

**The College evaluates its mission statement every five years (1FE 1.4)** as part of its strategic planning process. On February 11, 2011 the College kicked off its most recent "Mission and Vision Fest," **during which all faculty and staff, after considering a preliminary address by President Stout, divided into small teams of 10 to 12. The teams brainstormed common goals and envisioned the College in 2016. Facilitators took notes and used flipcharts to capture ideas. The President then continued the College-wide conversation in a retooled, electronic format in order to accommodate additional voices and second thoughts (1FE 1.3).** As a result of these 2011 conversations, the College re-affirmed its current mission, and began the creation, as is its standard practice, of a new five-year strategic plan to accomplish those shared aspirations.

#### ***Beyond Access: The Strategic Plan to 2016 (The Six Strategic Goals)***

1. ***Increase student access and success.*** Develop multiple pathways for entry to reduce barriers to enrollment, ensure seamless student transitions (from high school to college, from non-credit to credit, from college to transfer, from college to career, from career to college) and improve student academic achievement and goal attainment.
2. ***Build curricular relevance, innovation in delivery and supportive faculty development systems.*** Create an environment to support faculty innovation to develop distinctive curricular offerings delivered in flexible and stackable formats that meet current and future societal and workforce needs and that lead to successful student academic achievement and goal attainment.
3. ***Develop an engaged community.*** Design connections between students, faculty, the College and the community that support student learning and academic achievement and that benefit community revitalization and renewal.
4. ***Create a sense of place to support learning.*** Create a learning and working environment that is sustainable, welcoming, safe, and dynamic irrespective of location (physical and virtual) that leads to improved student success and community engagement.
5. ***Adopt an entrepreneurial approach.*** Adopt creative funding models and organizational practices that increase the ability to sustain and meet current and future institutional priorities.
6. ***Create a high-performance culture.*** Develop a culture with systems and processes that nurture creativity and innovation, lead to continuous improvement, and reward high performance to meet the College's access and success goals.

Informed by the Mission and Vision Fest, the President and her leadership team held a series of discussions leading to the development of "Beyond Access: The Strategic Plan through 2016." **The plan clearly defines six strategic goals to guide decision-making at the College (1FE 1.1):** increase success and access; build curricular relevance, innovation in delivery and supportive faculty development systems; develop an engaged community; create a sense of place to support learning; adopt an entrepreneurial approach; and create a high-performance culture (Figure 1.2). The Vice Presidents and their teams then formulated corresponding Critical Success Factors (CSFs) for each goal in an effort to provide key benchmarks for institutional achievement of the goals. (See Appendix 1.1 for the full text of the mission, goals, and strategic plan with CSFs.) After being vetted by the four All-College

Figure 1.2: The Strategic Goals. The Strategic Plan identifies six strategic goals for 2011-2016.

Governance committees, on which serve representative faculty, staff, and students from all units of the College, the Board of Trustees approved the new strategic plan, with its six goals and related CSFs.

## Self-Study Methodology

During the Self-Study, Working Group 1 was charged with describing how the mission of the College is reviewed and how the mission informs planning and decision-making. In addition, the Working Group investigated how the College communicates its mission via its strategic goals, and how it then evaluates the mission's implementation and achievement. To accomplish these charges, Working Group 1 reviewed the current mission, philosophy, and values statement, studied the College's current strategic plan, related strategic goals and critical success factors, and examined all historical documents approved by the Board of Trustees related to the College's mission. They then considered the most recent strategic planning process, inventoried print and electronic documentation about the mission, and discussed the College's cascading goals with members of the faculty, administration, students, and staff. Finally, the Working Group consulted the 2010 Periodic Review Report and 2005 Self-Study Report.

## Findings and Discussion

### Strengths

Working Group 1 found the College's process for re-affirming its mission and developing five-year goals **well organized, collaborative, and subject to formal approval by the four All-College Governance Committees and the Board of Trustees (1FE 1.3 and 1.4)**. Many opportunities were provided to faculty, students, and administrators to be involved; most engaged enthusiastically. For example, participants in the "Reimagining our Expectations" blog included the President and several faculty members discussing the presentation of the mission. These faculty members suggested that the presentation of the mission statement was confusing to external community members. The College responded to these comments by changing the way it presented the mission and goals on the external website and separating the mission statement from the statement of values, for clarity. Dissenting opinions were heard and discussed; new administrative responses resulted from the conversation. This example typifies the mission renewal process.

**The development of the strategic goals also provided consistency with the College's mission and continuity from the last strategic plan (1FE 3).** Small changes clarified continuing objectives, as the 2010 goal previously worded "ensure a quality, coherent, relevant and innovated curriculum" became the more action-oriented "build curricular relevance, innovation in delivery and supportive faculty development systems." As well, the aspiration to "become an entrepreneurial college" was modified to the more systemic "adopt an entrepreneurial approach." Two previous goals concerning campus rejuvenation—"ensure a model and modern workplace" and "invest in campus renewal"—towards which much progress had been made since 2010, were merged to become "create a sense of place to support learning." The former goal of "expand[ing] community and strategic partnerships" was broadened to support connections between faculty and students as well as to respond to the results from the **Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)** about the need to support



student engagement. The revised goal became “develop an engaged community.” Finally, one new goal, “create a high-performance culture” was added to the plan to support creativity, innovation, and continuous improvement (Figure 1.3). **The Working Group affirmed that the College develops thoughtful strategic goals that build on past accomplishments and anticipate future innovation, that relate to key external as well as to internal stakeholders, and that focus on student learning, College-specific outcomes, and institutional improvement (1FE 2 and 1FE 4).**

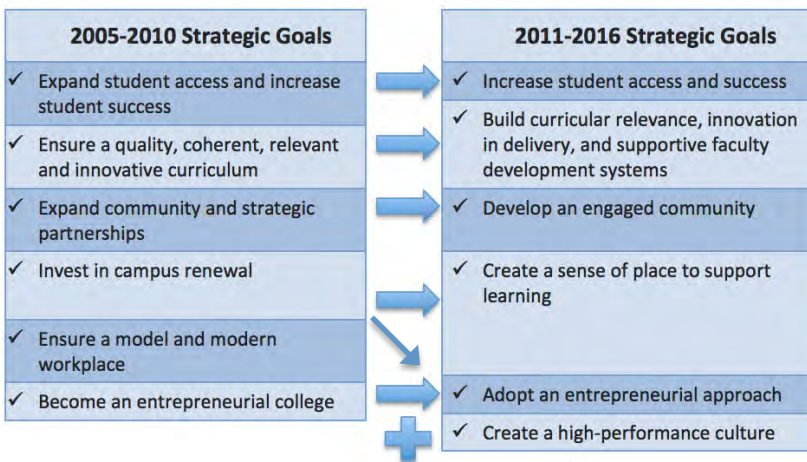


Figure 1.3: 2005-2010 Strategic Goals Compared to 2011 – 2016 Strategic Goals: The strategic plan and its related goals preserve continuity while adding new emphases.

Once the strategic plan is developed, the College’s **strategic goals are distributed broadly and communicated to many constituencies (1FE 1.5).** Not only does the College present the goals on its public website, but presents them in many print publications. The College announces strategic goals at convocation, trains new employees about the strategic goals, and informs students about them through

the Course Catalog. *Big Dreams*, the Alumni magazine, features the goals on its inside cover, and the College administration regularly presents them to key stakeholders, including local legislators, other college presidents, and community leaders. A list of evidence regarding how the goals are communicated, discussed, and renewed appears in Appendix 1.2.

**The Working Group also confirmed that the College’s strategic goals clearly and consistently “cascade” to all levels of the organization.** The President’s Report to the Board, which is circulated each month to the entire College community, is organized by the strategic goals, administrative Performance Management metrics include the strategic goals, and **every expanded initiative, budget item, or curricular proposal must be justified in advancing one or more of these six key goals (1FE 1).** The **Institutional Effectiveness Model (IEM)**, which reports on the College’s achievement of its mission using high-level assessment data, employs the six goals as its organizational structure. The Curriculum Committee embeds the six goals in its evaluation of academic programs (whether it be for program creation, modification, or deletion). **The College’s grant development process, used to advance many student support, creative, or scholarly initiatives, also makes use of the six goals to frame potential opportunities (1FE 1.2).** The Working Group found extensive evidence across all divisions and at all levels for the knowledge and use of the cascading strategic goals, and for the reporting of data against the CSFs to assess the success of the College’s mission (Figure 1.4).

Goal Planning Worksheet	
Goal Title	Effective implementation of new Performance Management Process and Systems
Strategic Alignment/Category (Goal & Critical Factor)	6 – Create a High Performance Culture
Description: Describe key objectives, justification and value added	Implementation of a new Performance Management Process and System with a focus on improving College workforce productivity, outcomes, and supervisory relationships. Goal is to support the ongoing development of a High Performance Culture, and ensure continued results in a tightening budgetary environment. Goal is also to support and establish long-term systems and skills for effective succession planning and talent development. New process should be aligned to the Strategic Planning and Goal Setting processes.
Key Goal Deliverable/Metric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New PMP Web-Based System by 7/1/2013, with 100% compliance in all three phases</li> <li>▪ Improve PMP Core Value ratings by 20%</li> <li>▪ Improve retention of High Potential staff by 40%</li> <li>▪ Ensure training program satisfaction with rating of 4.00+</li> </ul>
Due Date	6/30/2015

Figure 1.4: Division and Personal Goals Map to Strategic Goals and CSFs. The goals and CSFs cascade to all aspects of College planning, even to an individual's goal planning worksheet, shown here.

The six strategic goals have become, particularly over the past ten years, intrinsic to the College's operation; they inform conversations as well as decisions, and they are the lenses through which the College evaluates the achievement of its mission. Since the cascading goals reflect how faculty and staff contribute to mission achievement, they also demonstrate, therefore, how the mission is embedded into the College's culture. These goals play out in interactions of all of the College's constituencies. In short, the Working Group found the College's focus on its mission through the use of cascading goals to be an aspirational and organizational strength.

## Opportunities

Since the College organizes most of its activities around the mission statement and six strategic goals, their widespread use did alert the Working Group to additional opportunities around the refinement of the mission statement. **First, the Working Group found no formal process in place to capture either conversations about or potential adjustments to the mission statement between the five-year renewal milestones, at least at levels below those of the President's Leadership Cabinet.** Although the College finds its five-year review process necessary for deep reflection and planning, the Working Group saw a need for a more nimble mechanism for feedback and documentation, a mechanism that goes beyond the annual goal-setting processes already undertaken by the Vice Presidents. For example, some members of the College community interviewed by the Working Group reported the need to edit the length of the mission statement or to condense the philosophy statement. Others noted that mention of the College's new Core goals is missing. (See related discussion below.) Right now, there is not an ongoing process for documenting ideas about mission, only a five-year review process linked to

the strategic planning cycle. **The College should consider strategies for documenting ongoing discussions about mission review and build the results of those discussions into its long-term strategic planning process.**

Second, the College's thirteen **General Education Core goals** (referred to from this point on as the College's "**Core**") need to be more clearly referenced within the College's mission, values, and strategic goals statements. As detailed in the 2010 Periodic Review Report, the adoption of the new Core goals, which apply to all degree programs regardless of whether a student pursues a transfer or a workforce degree, resulted from three years of intense conversation about academic values. While the Core goals are derived from the mission statement, particularly in the idea that "learning is a lifelong activity requiring constant adaptation of programs, courses, and learning support services to reflect social, technological, and workforce changes and to ensure that all learners reach their unique goal," the Working Group found a need for some mention of Core in the mission and philosophy statement. Particularly as the strategic goals become more integrated with planning and assessment, the Core goals need to be better explained and communicated to students in relation to the achievement of that mission. **The College should further describe how its Core goals evolve from its mission, values, and strategic planning statements.**

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

**1.a The College should consider strategies for documenting ongoing discussions about mission review and build the results of those discussions into its long-term strategic planning process.**

(Theme 3: Continuous Institutional Renewal)

**1.b The College should further describe how its Core goals evolved from its mission, values, and strategic planning statements.**

(Theme 4: College Values)



# Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

## Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal



### Outcomes-Based Planning Informs Academic Affairs

Clarity of focus characterizes the outcomes-based planning and resource allocation process at the College. Outcomes, defined here as the goals, benefits, or changes that the College wants to achieve in any given area, motivate the deployment of limited resources.

Although all areas benefit from this focus, the Academic Affairs Strategic Planning Process provides a good example of the College's rigorous outcomes-based planning and resource allocation method.

An Academic Affairs Strategic Plan guides the College's vision for its programs and course offerings. Designed around a five-year timetable through 2014-15, the Plan represents a snapshot or rallying point for the ongoing dynamics within Academic Affairs, as well as for the College and community at large. The plan fully aligns with the College's overall Strategic Plan through 2016, focusing predominantly on increasing student access and success, and building curricular relevance, innovation in delivery and supportive faculty development systems – with an increased emphasis on adopting an entrepreneurial approach. The Plan communicates Academic Affairs' strategic rollout of new, expanded, and restructured programs. Given the dynamic nature of the College's human capital, financial resources, and student body, however, the Plan acknowledges that programs representing the highest priority at the time of writing may not be a significant focus in the future as the College responds to workforce needs and political mandates at the local, State, and Federal level.

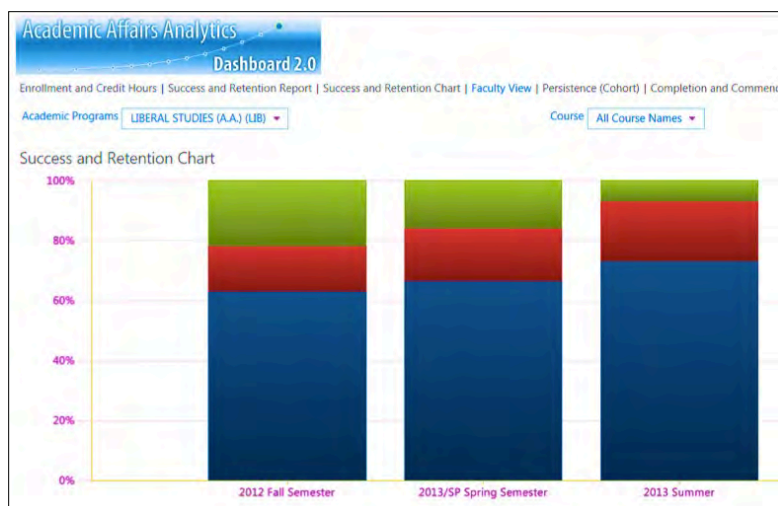


Figure 2.1: Academic Affairs Dashboard. Program data at a glance is available to inform planning and help with assessment.

To create this plan, the Provost organized brainstorming sessions, solicited select reports from outside consultants, and asked for input from the College's faculty. Proposed initiatives were then analyzed for enrollment impact, evaluated against regional workforce needs, and compared to staff and administrative resources. This analysis was achieved in part through the use of quality data analytics. A new Academic Affairs Dashboard provides real-time Program data (Figure 2.1).



The Plan itself analyzes regional market trends in supply and demand, compensation, and employment projections (Figure 2.2). Some initiatives are integrated into the strategic plan for the current budget planning process, while others are planned for later years. Assessment of the plan occurs quarterly, while updates to the Plan occur annually.

## Health Sciences

### Regional Academic Competition Analysis

Occupational Therapy Assistant is currently associated with CIP code 51.2306. As of 2011, there were 172 students completing associated academic programs regionally. In 2009, there were 59 seats offered within these programs with 1497 jobs available in the sector. Job projections through 2016 are estimated to be 1732, a 16% percent change.

Academic Affairs Strategic Plan 2013-2016

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*Figure 2.2: Excerpt from the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan. The Academic Affairs Strategic Plan includes regional analysis and job projections prior to the implementation of new or restructured initiatives.*

For example, one of the Health Sciences Division's primary foci over the next five years will be the anticipated renovation and expansion of the Physical Education Center into a new Health Sciences Center (HSC). All Central Campus health career programs will relocate to the HSC. Current programs include Dental Hygiene, Exercise Science and Wellness (already located in the current building), Health and Fitness Professional, Medical Assisting, Medical Coding, Medical Laboratory Technician, Medical Office Assistant, Phlebotomy, and Nursing. In addition to current programs at the Central Campus, the Academic Affairs Strategic plan suggests that several new programs be added to the current portfolio in tandem with the renovations. For example, the Plan suggests the creation of an Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) AAS program. The Plan specifies that an OTA AAS program offered through the new HSC would require partnerships for student clinical learning experiences. Approximately \$500,000 dollars in startup funding for space configuration, equipment, and supplies is anticipated. The new program would be a special admissions program estimated to support approximately 15 new students annually once it is at full capacity. This plan informs ongoing budget discussions as well as the facilities, IT, and human resources planning processes.

While the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan discusses drivers for new, expanded, and restructured initiatives, the **Program Analysis Report (PAR)** assesses each academic program annually. The PAR (which replaced the Program Report Card) includes status updates, enrollment outlook, and resource allocations (that is, needs assessment, cost comparison, financial reporting with relation to College-wide ratio of tuition and fees to costs). The program coordinator, with the support of the program faculty and division Dean, now develops these items and submits the final report through an online interface to the Office of Academic Affairs. After review, the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost returns approved PARs, which contain a one-year action plan, to the academic Dean and program coordinators for implementation and integration with the budget process. These PARs are stored electronically and become the historical foundation of the five-year **Academic Program Review (APR)**. Rather than starting from scratch every five years, therefore,



program coordinators can cull assessment and budget information from the past four annual reports to support their five-year evaluation of the program. All of these initiatives speak to the College's use of planning for decision-making and institutional renewal (2.3).

Appendix 2.1 provides additional evidence of the College's planning and resource allocation strategy and contains the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan, a sample APR, a sample Program Budget, a sample PAR, and related planning documents.

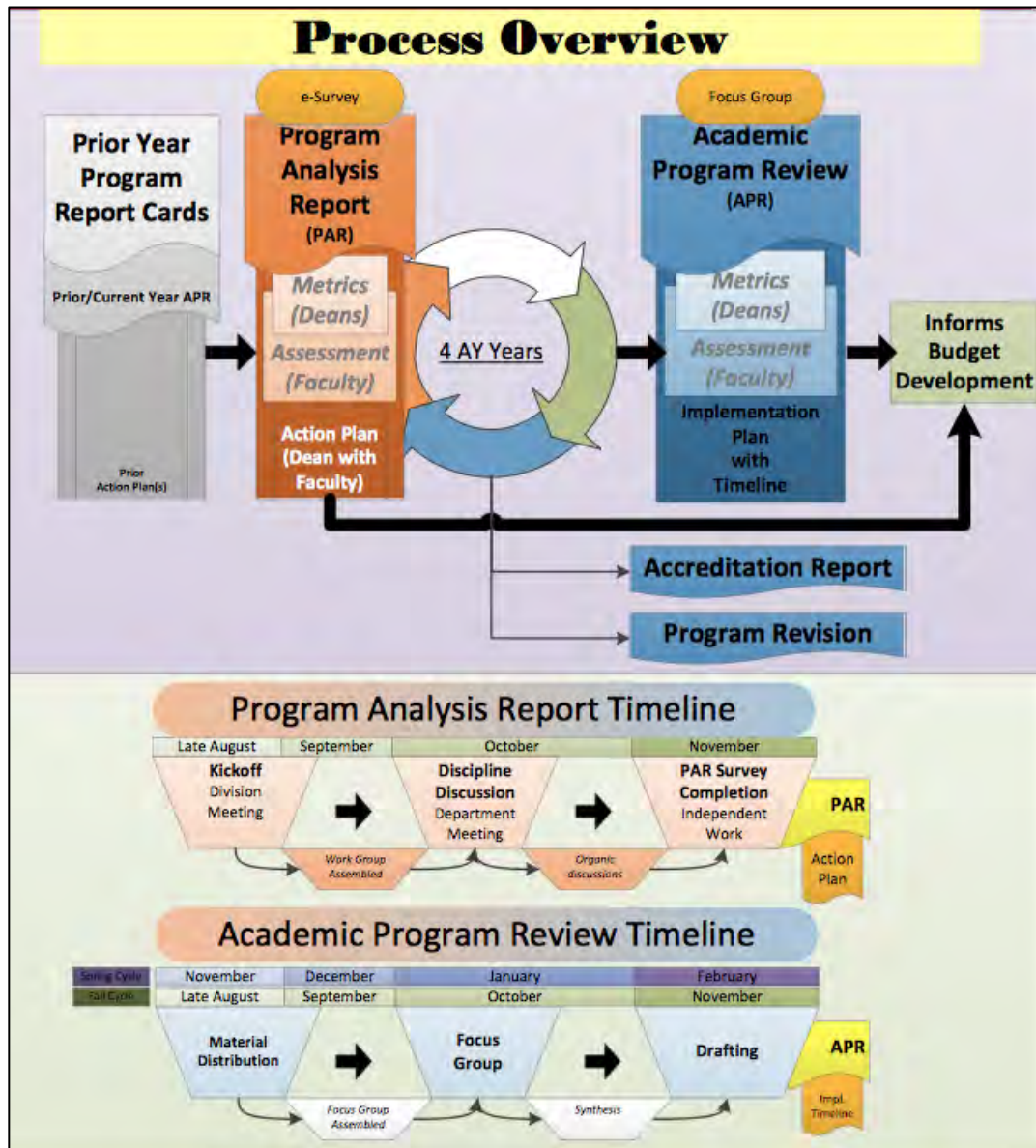


Figure 2.3: Annual PAR and Five-Year APR Timeline. Academic affairs planning and assessment processes have become an area of strength for the College.

## Background and Overview

*N.B. Compliance items are indicated in bold and matched with the corresponding Fundamental Element (FE); see the Accreditation Readiness Roadmap for specific documents evidencing that compliance.*

**The College uses a regular and coordinated process of planning and assessment to maintain, support, and improve its programs and services (2FE 3).** Critical Success Factors (CSFs) directly align unit goals with the accomplishment of the strategic plan. From these, **annual unit goals are set** (for Finance and Administration, Student Success and Enrollment Services, Information Technology and Campus Services, Development and External Relations, West Campus, and Academic Affairs and its five divisions) **and benchmarking metrics assigned (2FE 1).** Long-term planning documents, such as the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan 2013-2016, the Information Technology Plan to 2016, the Facilities Master Plan to 2022 and the Foundation Campaign Plan, also inform annual goals and cascade from the six strategic goals. With the implementation of the College's new **Performance Management Process (PMP)** in AY13-14, individual goals for administrators now tie to the accomplishment of unit goals. After specific units develop and communicate plans, they too are synchronized with the budget cycle (including that of human resources) to ensure support (Figure 2.4).

Preparing a budget well aligned to strategic goals integrates the College's operating, capital, and strategic planning into a single, comprehensive process. **This process includes multiple face-to-face meetings with organizational units to discuss the budgets in all of its aspects, including operating requirements, staffing, equipment and other capital needs, strategic initiatives, revenue-generating opportunities and targeted cost-saving measures (2FE 2).** These new face-to-face meetings have helped eliminate frustration with automated forms and have saved time, as the budget is not built after a paper submission that then needs to be changed, and because the budget ties to the program review and curricular change processes. The budget is built from the bottom-up, with staffing levels and non-compensation expense for each program and unit clearly documented for review by the area Vice Presidents, who, as a group, prioritize initiatives and adjust resources as needed. Quarterly budget meetings help react to enrollment challenges and anticipated reductions in public funding, based on the key strategic goals. **Public finance meetings, which are open to the entire College community on a quarterly basis, are a particularly welcome new addition to the communication of allocation processes (2FE 2).** Resource allocation, therefore, is integrated with planning and negotiated in groups, guided by the members of the **President's Leadership Cabinet (2FE 4).**

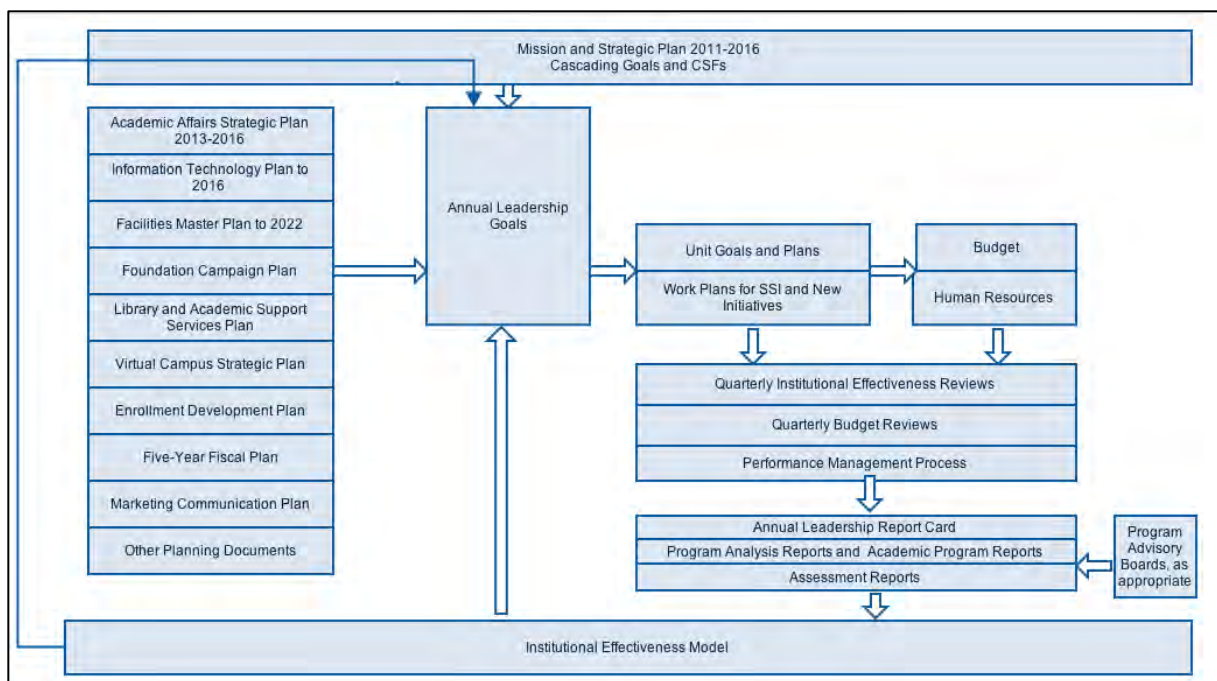


Figure 2.4: Strategic Goals Cascade to All Levels. Cascading goals link initiatives and plans to assessment and allocation decisions.

Every quarter, the President and Vice-Presidents hold **Institutional Effectiveness Reviews** to evaluate progress towards the CSFs, analyze success against metrics, and discuss any required changes (2FE 1 and 2FE 6). These discussions are based on meetings that the Vice-Presidents have already held among the members of their own teams, so that Institutional Effectiveness Review make use of information from all levels of the College community. At the end of the academic year, each unit prepares an annual evaluation of strategic initiatives, including a **Leadership Report Card** and administrative evaluations, which assess the achievement of CSFs, program outcomes, and related goals. The **Institutional Effectiveness Model (IEM)**, which is discussed at length in the chapter on Standard 7, reports progress against each strategic goal in statistical format. The IEM also includes student-success metrics information gleaned from assessment results (2FE 5).

### Self-Study Methodology

During the Self-Study, Working Group 2 was charged with evaluating the effectiveness of the College's strategic planning process with respect to its resource allocation, its flexibility in response to changing institutional needs, and its plan for continued responsible growth. The Working Group also analyzed the College's use of data to assess its allocations and determine the creation, expansion, modification, and retirement of programs or other initiatives. To accomplish this review, Working Group 2 interviewed senior members of the Finance and Administration and Academic Affairs units and reviewed myriad documents, including, but not limited to, meeting minutes, program financial assumptions, feasibility studies, strategic priority guidelines, unit strategic plans, and demographic and enrollment trends.

## Findings and Discussion

### Strengths

The Working Group found that the College employs a very collaborative process to arrive at a comprehensive plan to support long- and short-term goals with limited resources. All stakeholders are engaged. The College has an inclusive operating and capital budget planning process based on its mission, goals, and long-term strategic plan. Each program and College initiative in the budget must be justified in accordance with the strategic plan and is reviewed regularly, with outcomes measured against specific metrics. Initiatives are created, expanded, or reshaped on the basis of these evaluations. In a similar way, human resource allocations are part of the goal-setting and budgeting process. Finally, the College effectively communicates its strategic plan in multiple ways—on its website, at the President’s convocation address, through posters, pamphlets and the portal, at All-College Committee meetings, at faculty, division, and all-hands staff meetings, and at open fora.

The Working Group highlighted newly developed strengths of the College in the area of planning and resource management. First, **adding a broader range of financial and curricular assumptions to allocation planning, as well as the College’s adoption of fiscal program cost spreadsheets, made the management of several new initiatives successful.** Program costs are now built into the planning process in a consistent and documented way. For example, the new Culinary Arts Institute was planned based on a series of documented assumptions that were then translated into a budget plan. This budget included an assessment of curricular and potential growth concerns that were not previously part of regular budget planning sessions. Program costing assumptions, as Figure 2.5 below indicates, include information about enrollment, retention, and future expansion.

ASSUMPTIONS:	Year 1	Year 2
	FY 2014	FY 2015
1st & 2nd semester students	60	92
3rd & 4th semester students	50	48
Total # of credit students	110	140
In-County Tuition per credit	\$112	\$114
Comprehensive Fee per credit	\$5	\$5
Technology Fee per credit	\$15	\$15
Student Activity Fee per credit	\$3	\$3
Total I/C Cost per credit (non-CUL courses)	\$135	\$138
<b>Culinary Fee (per credit) (125% tuition &amp; fees)</b>	<b>\$169</b>	<b>\$172</b>
Total I/C Cost per credit (CUL courses)	\$304	\$310
Percent In County (I/C) students	85%	85%
Out of County Tuition per credit	\$224	\$228
O/C Facility Fee	\$10	\$10

Figure 2.5: Program Costing. Assumptions about Program Costing are used to allocate resources for all new initiatives at the College. Above, a program costing excerpt from the Culinary Arts Initiative.



Secondly, since the 2010 PRR, which enjoined the College to turn its data into useable information, the College has made great strides in metrics-driven planning and execution. Work plans are now color-coded to explain their importance and data are made available to justify the target level of red, green or yellow. Green projects are meeting or exceeding expectations, yellow are in a monitoring period, and red require a critical decision or are not succeeding. For example, the **Virtual Campus** initiative, launched in 2013, expands, aggregates, and improves the College's long-standing distance education programs. The Virtual Campus ensures that online students have access to the College's resources, courses, and select programs of study. The work plan in Figure 2.6 illustrates the effective use of information to manage new initiatives at the administrative level.

Virtual Campus Master Workplan										
KEY DATES/ACTIVITIES				March 2013				April 2013		
			Week Of:	3/4	3/11	3/18	3/25	4/1	4/8	4/15
								TBD-BoT-Fee Approval		


Figure 2.6: Example of Metrics-Driven Planning. A color-coded work plan illustrates the College's emphasis on metric-driven planning and execution.

In other cases, metrics tied to strategic goals are being measured and communicated on an ongoing basis. Below are examples of strategic goals that cascade into unit goals, as well as the metrics used to measure their achievement (Figure 2.7).

<p><b>College Goal: Build Curricular Relevance, Innovation and Faculty Development</b></p> <p>➔ Business and Entrepreneurial Initiatives Unit Goal: Implement year two of the Virtual Campus plan</p> <p>➔➔ Metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Monitor the number of courses undergoing the “refresh” process, a process which readies courses to meet VC standards.</li> <li>☑ Add two additional AA/AS degree program offerings for Fall 2014.</li> </ul>
<p><b>College Goal: Increase Student Access and Success</b></p> <p>➔ Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Unit Goal: Continue the redesign of the student entry process with a focus on redesigning advising</p> <p>➔➔ Metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Improve Fall to Spring persistence from 65.1% to 75.1%.</li> <li>☑ Increase full-time students taking 15 credits to 25% of the student body.</li> </ul>

Figure 2.7: Cascading Unit Goals. The College’s six strategic goals “cascade” down to unit goals with associated metrics.

As shown, metrics are established, measured, and then communicated across the College on an ongoing basis, so that everyone, from program directors to student advisors, can clearly and easily understand how the College achieves a particular benchmark. Figure 2.8 shows a slide from the College’s Strategic Initiatives and Goals update sessions, held quarterly.



## Increase Student Access and Success

### – Goal 1b

Launch the first year of the Gateway to College effort	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal Metrics</b></p> <p>Fall 2013- Two Full Cohorts (1 per campus) – 50 total</p> <p>Fall 2014- Two Full Cohorts (1 per campus) – 50 total</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Student Transition – 75%</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress towards Metrics</b></p> <p>Fall 2013- Two Full Cohorts(1 per campus)–21 total (42%)</p> <p>Spring 2014 – Two Cohorts – 28-30 (56-60%)</p> <p>Student Transition - 17 transitioning to Spring (81%)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HS Graduates – 1</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤Completed MOU with the WIB on funding for 10 out-of-school youth.</li> <li>➤Ongoing mapping of courses for the Upper Moreland partnership, supporting the school district with information for gaining Board support, and preparing for complete launch for fall 2014.</li> <li>➤Developed Blackboard contract, awaiting Upper Moreland School Board to approve the collaboration</li> <li>➤Began discussions and planning for a College Pathway Academy for Education with Phoenixville, Perkiomen Valley, and Owen J. Roberts school districts, a College Pathway Academy for STEM with Upper Merion School District</li> <li>➤Launched the Pottstown School District Early College Initiative</li> <li>➤Hosted Educator Summit focused on Math (23 participants)</li> <li>➤Established \$100,000 Endowment and received first EITC(Earned Income Tax Credit) gift</li> <li>➤Reworked Pro-Forma to remain within Budget</li> </ul>	

Figure 2.8: Sample Quarterly Update. A slide from a quarterly update (AY13-14 Q1) on college goals and initiatives shows activity, metrics, progress, challenges, and potential changes.



Finally, the College also uses **Decision Support Systems (DSS)** to create a leading-edge technological environment that harnesses data analytics to assist in making informed decisions. Information Technology has provided a full suite of tools available to all decision makers including user-driven reporting systems, performance dashboards, and sophisticated analytics systems. These tools analyze data from the College's **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system**, the student information system, all financial systems, and, most-recently, the course management system. The tools allow users to quickly access and analyze data to identify trends and model future predictions. Custom reports can be created and shared with others.

Instead of anecdotal evidence, academic deans, directors, and coordinators can now easily analyze enrollment trends, individual courses, graduation rates, demographics, and many other data points that inform decision-making. Various areas throughout the College are now using data analysis tools to make informed decisions about student recruitment, registration, scheduling, and student success.

For example, the ability to analyze registration at the division and program level has enabled the College to more accurately predict the success of new programs, find creative ways to reduce costs, and even manage parking capacity. The Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment

Management uses dashboards and a wide variety of reports to monitor and analyze enrollment data. These reports have been especially useful in monitoring enrollment and registration information and comparing historical trends. A new email newsletter communicates easy-to-

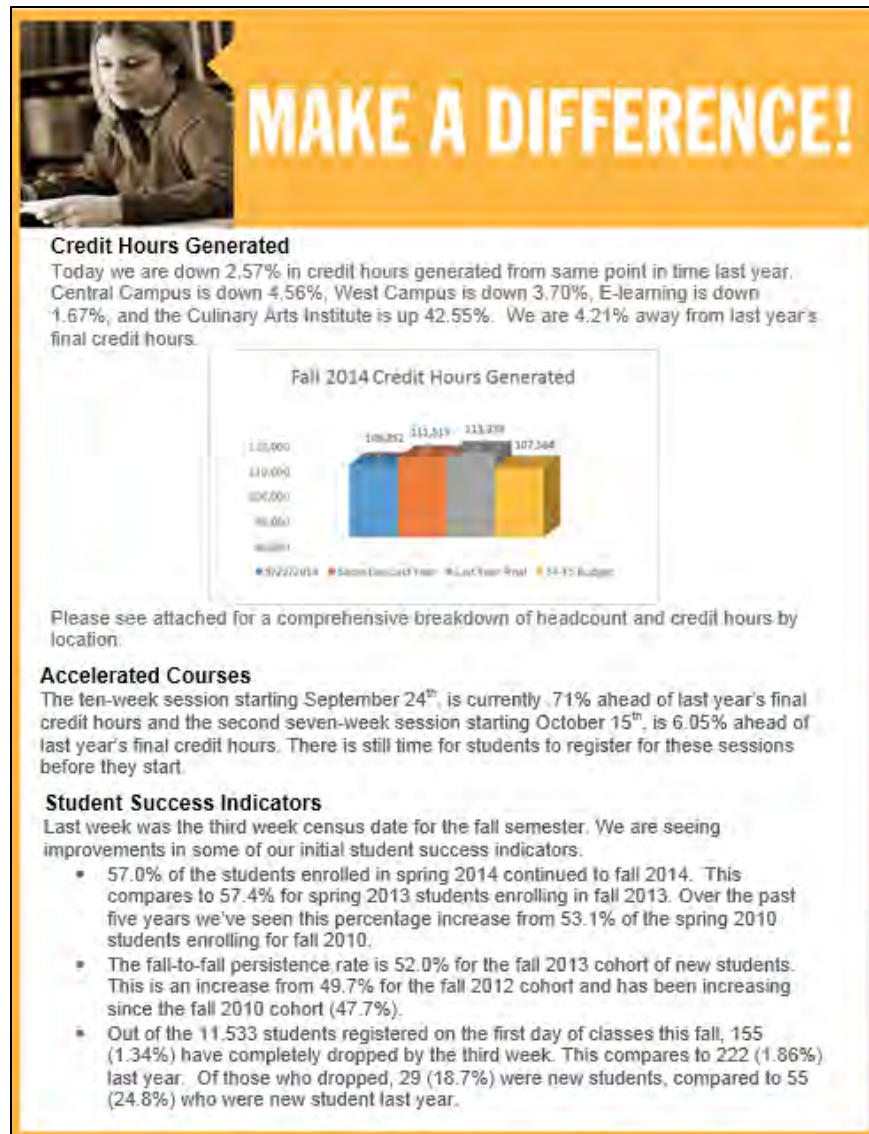


Figure 2.9: Enrollment Updates Include Data. A new newsletter to communicate data in support of enrollment efforts is circulated by the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management on a weekly basis (daily during peak registration periods).

read, graphical representations of key performance indicators (Figure 2.9) and demonstrates efforts by the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management to circulate data-driven information to the whole College to support enrollment efforts.

## Opportunities

Although the College shows strength in most areas concerned with planning and institutional renewal, the Working Group did note two specific opportunities for improvement. **First, the College needs to continue to develop its resource allocation methodologies.** During the past few years the Business Office has significantly improved budgeting and expense reporting, which, in turn, has improved program financial analysis and cost-benefit analysis. When a program is reviewed, both academic and resource allocations are now included. The College has also bettered its budget process and now allocates costs from any line of a budget (e.g. from payroll, instructional supplies, general supplies, or travel) specifically to a department or program. However, additional attention to best practices is needed to achieve excellence, particularly in the empowerment of budget managers. For example, opportunities for collaborative budget improvement might be explored. Currently, for example, the technology fee is used to purchase a significant amount of IT equipment; savings from the use of this fee should be returned to the technology fee account. In general, more could be done to allow these funds to incent saving within the generating unit. Also, the Working Group found that more positive feedback to the individuals involved in generating unit savings or gains may encourage future innovation. Finally, the Working Group noted that the Finance and Administration unit has no way of incenting cost-center managers to find budget savings. The Working Group found a continued need for incentives that reward innovative resource allocation strategies. **The College should continue to optimize its resource allocation methodologies, particularly those that advance innovation.**

**Second, the College should consider further expanding access to institutional data resources in order to enhance the use of data by all.** Although the College continues to use information gleaned from data at the administrative level, those employees below the top-level of the administrative structure have difficulty finding, retrieving, and interpreting data. While some steps towards data access have been taken, the Working Group suggested that more would be helpful. The College has implemented a transactional reporting tool for end-users, called **Colleague Reporting and Operational Analytics (CROA)**. Staff may use CROA to run both transactional reports to support day-to-day processing needs as well as to create analytics to substantiate process improvements. In addition, Information Technology migrated to a SQL-based Colleague environment, which should support additional data analysis needs. Recently, the College implemented **Blackboard Analytics for Learn**, software that can provide faculty who request LMS analytics with dashboards of student performance as well as drill-down reports for individual student assessment. Increasingly, Finance and Administration staff are using **Synoptix** software to facilitate some budget reporting. In short, the all of these tools do provide opportunities for data use by select, knowledgeable, and trained end-users.

Increasingly, however, program coordinators (responsible for proposing curricular changes) and staff (particularly those interested in making creative process improvements) are asked to provide data to support new proposals. At the time of the Working Group

conversations, the Group found that neither Blackboard Analytics for Learn nor CROA was widely used by program coordinators or faculty. As well, the small staff of the College's Institutional Research office, even when supported by Information Technology staff, simply cannot respond in a timely way to the growing number of data requests from faculty members and administrative staff. Asking mid-level management and faculty coordinators to use data and metrics to plan and budget requires more training and simpler access to data-analysis systems. Institutional effectiveness and assessment data need to be easier to locate and access. Additionally, data should be stored in a way that is easier for the mid-level user to interpret. Data, which are so necessary to the College's new culture of metrics and information, need to be available more widely throughout the College community. **The College should provide greater access to data, as relevant and appropriate to an individual's position, and provide training in data analysis, as needed.** Ease of access will alleviate the reporting burden on both the Office of Institutional Research and Information Technology while enhancing the effective use of data analysis college-wide.

### Suggestions for Improvement

- 2.a The College should continue to optimize its resource allocation methodologies, particularly those that advance innovation.**  
(Theme 3: Continuous Institutional Renewal)
- 2.b The College should provide greater access to data used to support the planning process, as relevant and appropriate to an individual's position, and provide training in data analysis, as needed.**  
(Theme 3: Continuous Institutional Renewal)



# Standard 3: Institutional Resources

## Standard 3: Institutional Resources



### Accomplishing Responsible Facilities Renewal

One of the best examples of the successful management of institutional resources at the College has to be the success of its campus renewal plans. Prior to 2006, the College, which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2014, had seen no major classroom renovation to its Central Campus since 1972. Both the previous and the current statement of strategic goals emphasized the creation of a modern, comfortable, and sustainable campus to support student persistence and community engagement, guided by a comprehensive facilities master plan.

Many of the capital improvement projects completed over the past 10 years evidence fiscal responsibility combined with the proactive leveraging of capital funding opportunities offered by the State and matched by the County. For example, the construction of the Advanced Technology Center in 2007, was made possible with \$17 million, 50% from the State and 50% from the County. The ATC now houses high-demand programs in biotechnology, computing, and media and has become the “signature” building on campus. The subsequent renovation of Parkhouse and College Halls used \$40 million in capital funds made possible by the State and County. Parkhouse Hall now boasts modern classrooms and updated offices, an atrium in which student and faculty events may be held, and a Center for Entrepreneurial Studies that both assists County residents who are starting new businesses and rents start-up “incubator” space to community members. College Hall’s new student success areas offer students state-of-the-art tutorial support services, while its renovated library and learning spaces have made it the hub of student life. Finally, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has approved its share of funding (50%) for the \$35 million renovation of the Physical Education building into a modern, expanded **Health Sciences Center**. On December 20, 2012, the County Commissioners passed a resolution to fund the County’s share of the project (50 percent). With both funding sources in place, the College secured bond financing, hired an architect, and developed the detailed specifications for the building design. The President appointed two Health Science Center subcommittees (the Program subcommittee and the Facilities and Financing subcommittee) to codify the feasibility study and accommodate new programs, set learning space guidelines, select a banking partner, and work closely with the architect on the overall design. The goal is to open the Health Sciences Center in AY16-17. Each of these projects required the responsible deployment of College resources in order to leverage capital funding opportunities that may not appear again.

Other renewal projects resulted from the College’s ability to create public-private partnerships, particularly at the West Campus. **The University Center**, which allows the College’s partner institutions to offer a variety of bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees through an innovative public-private partnership and lease agreement, moved into 95 South Hanover Street in Pottstown, a newly renovated 10,500 square foot space, in August 2012. The College acquired 140 College Drive from Pottstown Borough for \$1, and the property is to be developed in partnership with the Schuylkill River Greenway Association as the **Schuylkill**

**Riverfront Academic and Heritage Center.** Finally, a pedestrian underpass and a renovation of the North Hall at West Campus were funded through a combination of grants and funds proved by Pottstown Borough, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and the College.

Some projects emerged from innovative thinking about funding models. In 2012, in another public-private partnership, the College broke ground on its 15,000 square foot **Culinary Arts Institute (CAI)**, which emphasizes hands-on, lab-based learning in a professional kitchen setting, balanced with academic courses and cooperative internship training. The CAI, in response to the strategic plan's emphasis on innovation, is designed to be financially self-supporting and self-sustaining. The National Restaurant Association anticipates significant industry growth through 2021, resulting in 28,200 new culinary jobs in Pennsylvania and 1.4 million new jobs nationwide. The CAI has the capacity to enroll up to 350 students over the next five years and will pay for its own development and growth. In addition, the Children's Center at Central Campus, which opened in 2009, created a new 9,200 square foot facility that provides child care to up to 84 children and gives students majoring in early childhood education an opportunity to observe toddler and pre-K classrooms in action. This project was funded from \$500,000 in 2008 Revenue Bonds and a College loan to the Center to be paid back over 20 years with proceeds from annual operations.

Finally, some facilities projects have been funded through private giving to match State funding. The Fine Arts Center, which opened in Spring 2009, expanded the existing "art barn" from 10,000 to 26,000 square feet, and provided much needed additional studio space for sculpture, ceramics, drawing, and painting, as student demand for these courses far outstripped the College's ability to provide space for them. A \$3 million fundraising campaign matched \$3 million in State funding, with the balance of \$700,000 raised through alternative fundraising efforts and the use of the capital fund balance.

Responsible management of State capital funding opportunities, the ability to create new public-private partnerships, innovative thinking about new funding models, and traditional private giving campaigns have guided the rejuvenation of the College's aging facilities. In the words of the strategic plan, the College has succeeded in creating "a sense of place to support learning." See Figure 3.1 for a timeline and photos of capital improvements evidencing the facilities renewal accomplished in support of the College's mission since 2005.



## Timeline: Highlights of Facilities Renewal Since the 2005 Self-Study



**2007:** North Hall at West Campus is remodeled for the College by a private developer and includes state-of-the-art classrooms, faculty offices, an art gallery/studio, the Workforce Investment Board-funded GED program and the Verizon Foundation Center for Excellence in Workforce Education and Training.

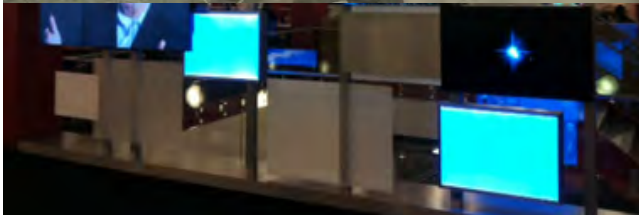


**2007:** The Advanced Technology Center, a 62,000 square foot facility on the Central Campus, opens. It became the "signature" building on campus, and houses high-demand programming in the fields of biotechnology, electronic game design, digital audio and video design, and communications.

**2008:** The Black Box Theatre and Music Practice Rooms developed at Central Campus, open to support the theatre and music programs.

**2009:** The Fine Arts Center, a 26,000 sq. ft expansion and renovation of the Art Barn, opens. It provides fine art studios and computer lab space for Digital Art programs, specialized studios for the visual fine arts (sculpture, ceramics, drawing and painting) a grand lobby, an art gallery, and a sculpture garden.

**2009:** The Children's Center, a new 9,000 square foot independent and self-sustaining child-care facility, opens and partners with College's education programs. The center can accommodate up to 84 children and provides an observation classroom.



**2009:** 140 College Drive is acquired for a nominal cost from Pottstown borough and presents the College with a unique opportunity to further invest in its commitment to sustainability and innovation with the integration of classroom and hand-on skills. The physical presence of the Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area in the building provides the perfect impetus for the College's plan to convert the remainder of the space into the Sustainability and Innovation HUB.



**2011:** A renovated Parkhouse Hall opens at Central Campus, which updates and expands the 1972 building to include 72 classrooms that meet 21<sup>st</sup> century educational needs. A central atrium with food service provides meeting space for students as well as an event space.

**2012:** The University Center was purchased by a developer and remodeled for the College's West Campus and allows students to attain select bachelor's and master's degrees with area colleges and universities.

**2012:** The Veteran's Resource Center, through a \$115,000 grant from The Collegiate Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development, is developed by renovating "202 House" at Central Campus.



**2013:** A renovated College Hall opens at Central Campus, which includes a renovated library space, a revamped Student Success Center, new gathering areas, two food service options, high-tech meeting rooms with smart technology, a Presidential Library Reading Room, a children's reading space and housing for the Betzwood Silent Film special collection.

**2013:** The Culinary Arts Institute opens in a 15,000-square-foot facility in Lansdale, with four state-of-the-art kitchens, three SMART classrooms, and a retail café/bakeshop.

Figure 3.1: Facilities Renewal since 2005. Rejuvenated facilities demonstrate the successful management of institutional resources.

## Background and Overview

*N.B. Compliance items are indicated in bold and matched with the corresponding Fundamental Element (FE); see the Accreditation Readiness Roadmap for specific documents evidencing that compliance.*

**Strong resource allocation processes, which are closely aligned with the College's six strategic goals, enable the College to support mission-centric activities amid changing economic circumstances (3FE 1).** Responsible fiscal planning and collaborative management have allowed the College to respond effectively to financial, facilities, and external challenges over the past ten years, including:

- **Changes in Revenue Sources.** At the time of the College's 2005 Self-Study report, students contributed 36% of the cost of attendance, while the Commonwealth and County accounted for the other 60%. Today that equation is nearly reversed, as 59% of the College's operating revenue comes from student tuition, while State and County contributions total only 39%. Annual reviews of revenue allocation and responsible fiscal decision-making have kept the College in a stable financial position throughout this change.
- **Variation in Enrollment Trends.** Economic and demographic factors directly affect the number of students enrolling in the College. Since the College's operating budget is nearly 60% tuition-dependent, a systematic approach to enrollment management has helped the College develop projections for associated revenue. For example, annual unduplicated headcount has grown from 16,522 in AY04-05 to 20,641 in AY13-14, but that growth has not been constant; instead, the College successfully managed its resources through an enrollment spike of 21,564 students at the height of the recession in 2009.
- **Investment in Campus Renewal.** As the College approached its 50-year anniversary, a revitalized physical plant was needed to support the College's educational mission. The successful management of multiple capital improvement projects since 2007 evidences the College's ability to be nimble and responsive, as it pursues the resources needed to take advantage of capital funding opportunities offered by the Commonwealth.

External factors, however, continue to affect the College's institutional resources. Two specific recent developments are of note. In February 2014, **Moody's** requested a phone conversation to review the College's financial results for fiscal year 2013, projections for fiscal year 2014 and estimated 2015 results. While the analyst complemented the College's strategic initiatives and investments, its forthright presentation of data and the continued strength of the College's management team, it reported a negative outlook for the higher education sector and downgraded the College's bond rating to Aa3 from Aa2. Moody's expects that rating downgrades are likely to exceed upgrades once again in 2014 for most of the higher education sector. Also affecting the College's financial reporting are the new requirements of the **Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB)**. In March 2012, GASB issued Statement No. 65, *Items Previously Reported as Assets and Liabilities*, which establishes accounting and financial reporting standards that reclassify certain items previously reported as assets and liabilities. The College was required to adopt Statement No. 65 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014 resulting in a write-off of \$685K of prepaid debt issuance costs. In June

2012, GASB issued Statement No. 68, *Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pensions – an amendment of GASB Statement No. 27*. The new standard requires cost-sharing employers to recognize a proportionate share of net pension liability. To comply, the College will be required to recognize an additional proportionate share estimated at \$5.4 million in FY14-15. The College does anticipate, however, full compliance with GASB standards.

Overall, however, sound strategies for the deployment of institutional resources has allowed the College to adapt quickly to these challenges in support of its mission; the Working Group, therefore, **affirmed the financial stability and integrity of the College, citing, in particular, unqualified audit opinions for each of the past three fiscal years (3FE 8 and 9 and Appendix 3.1).**

### Self-Study Methodology

During the Self-Study, Working Group 2 was charged with investigating the extent to which the budget process is institutionalized across the campus. In addition, Working Group 2 evaluated how well the College identified, planned, implemented and communicated process improvements related to Human Resources, technology, equipment, energy, and facilities. To support its research, members of the Working Group interviewed various administrative staff, representatives from the four All-College Committees, specific members of the Finance and Administration unit and the Foundation, sought out perspectives from students, and reviewed mailing materials.

#### **Budget Assumptions Set and Tested**

*The following are examples of assumptions made in calculating the FY 2015 Operating Budget (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015), were developed through a collaborative process and are reviewed and tested throughout the fiscal year:*

- *FY15 credit-hour enrollment is assumed to decrease 3% from FY14 levels.*
- *Overall enrollment mix is anticipated to stay the same (82.5% in-county, 14% out-of-county and 2.5% out-of-state, 1% dual enrollment) in FY15*
- *No change to the FY15 Commonwealth Appropriation*
- *An increase of \$410,000 in the County Appropriation for operations*
- *FY15 benefits include an anticipated 20% increase in premiums in calendar 2015.*

*Figure 3.2: Budget Assumptions Set and Tested. Working Group 2 noted new strengths in the College's budget development process, particularly in its emphasis on the careful and collaborative development of budget assumptions, a process that includes multiple face-to-face meetings with organizational units.*

### Findings and Discussion

#### Strengths

Working Group 2 noted new strengths in the College's budget development process, particularly in its **emphasis on the careful and collaborative development of budget assumptions, a process that includes multiple face-to-face meetings with organizational units. The budget is built from the bottom-up, with staffing levels and non-compensation expenses for each program and unit clearly documented for review by the area Vice Presidents, who adjust resources as needed (3FE 2 and 3).**

Each Fall, the College develops its operating and capital budgets and begins planning for the next fiscal year, which runs from July 1 until June 30. The initial budget development process includes the formulation of assumptions, such as those highlighted in Figure 3.2. These assumptions are developed after conversations with the President and the Board, with reference



to anticipated funding from Commonwealth and County, after a review of the Enrollment Development Plan, and after conversations with other Vice Presidents responsible for key planning criteria. The President is also presented with a preliminary, high-level budget at this point.

Next, a series of open budget meetings are held to discuss changes to the budgeting process, to again validate assumptions, and provide assistance to the Budget Managers, identified by the Vice Presidents, as responsible for maintaining individual unit budgets.. Budget Managers receive an annual Budget Memorandum, which provides an overview of the budget development process, as well as information on the budgets as well as actuals for the past two fiscal years. They also receive information on personnel lines and capital items that relate to their budget.

At this point, the Office of Finance and Administration schedules formalized budget

***Recommended Changes to FY13-14 Budget Process***

- *New involvement of Business Office staff in budget meetings to provide clear lines of communication and a better understanding of departmental activity. This involvement provides support to the Vice Presidents in terms of the distribution, review and consolidation of budget materials.*
- *Open meetings to discuss budgeting process and assumptions.*
- *Discussion of compensation lines as well as non-compensation lines.*
- *Fee budgets are now part of the general operations budget rather than separately considered items. This tracks with the format of the “Results of General Operations” report.*
- *The capital budget will be discussed and developed at the same time as the departmental operating budgets.*

meetings. Attendees generally include the responsible Vice President, the Department Director, the Budget Manager, Key Program Faculty/Staff with Budget Access, the Controller, and the appropriate Business Office staff.. During this meeting, there is open discussion of all budgetary information, including salary and position information, non-compensation budgets, capital needs, and strategic initiatives. **In its evaluation of these new discussions, the Working Group noted that the College is moving away from an incremental budget based on the previous year’s activity and is, instead, adopting a hybrid process that combines zero-based budgeting and responsibility-center management. Revenue-based, programmatic budgeting supports entrepreneurial, mission-critical initiatives (3FE 4).** This strategy allows a fluid assignment of resources based on strategic priorities. A discussion of how priorities are decided occurs in the chapter on Standard 2.

*Figure 3.3: Recommended Changes to FY13-14 Budget Process. Each year, the budget process is assessed and new recommendations are included in the annual Budget Memo.*

Next, a date is set for initial budget submission (generally in January) to respective Vice Presidents for approval and forwarding to Finance. The Vice President of Finance and Administration presents initial aggregate budget submission results to the President for discussion at February Board of Trustees Finance meeting. Fast tracking the budget process early in the calendar year allows the President to fully articulate and document our total operational need as the College enters the important public policy advocacy months of March, April and May. The Office of Finance and Administration again meets with the Vice President to discuss budgets, relays President and Board feedback, and set priorities. If needed, there are internal and

college-wide budget hearings to share the results of this process and gain feedback. Finally, at a Spring Board of Trustees Finance Committee Meeting, the budget is discussed and put forward to the Full Board for discussion and adoption.

At this point, the budget overview information is prepared and readied for presentation to County officials. The Final budget is then submitted to the President first, and then the Board of Trustees for approval and finalization. Final budgets are delivered to the Vice Presidents and Budget Managers, with the caveat that modifications may be made to individual line items provided total budget remains in balance with Trustee-approved total. The Office of Finance and Administration records budgets in **Ellucian Colleague** for posting on July 1. **The Vice President of Finance and Administration reviews the budget process for the year and brainstorms recommended changes to the next year's process as a form of self-assessment. Feedback on the process is formally recorded and incorporates recommended changes. These recommendations and process improvements appear on the annual Budget Memorandum. Figure 3-2 illustrates the budget feedback and assessment process from AY13-14 (3FE 10).**

Multi-year planning, and the development of three- and five-year financial plans, uses assumptions drawn from multiple planning documents—the Enrollment Development Plan (which includes marketing, communication, and recruitment strategies), the five-year Academic Affairs Strategic Plan, an external scan of peer institutions and the Commonwealth and County projections, among others. **The long-term budgeting process strives to reconcile the financial assumptions to the College's strategic, operating, and other plans, while assessing the College's future financial capacity and future risk factors (3FE 8).**

**The Working Group affirmed that the College manages its resources in a responsible and forward-thinking way. It conducts ongoing reviews of administrative systems and processes, student support services, and academic programs in order to invest where required and disinvest if programs fail to meet intended outcomes or are not mission-centric (3FE 1 and 4).** Examples of recent cost-containment strategies include:

- Offering a **Voluntary Retirement Incentive Plan** to eligible faculty and support staff aged 62 or older with ten years of continuous service in order to manage compensation costs going forward;
- Aggressively **managing administrative vacancies**, including leaving more than 30 positions unfilled and unfunded;
- **Controlling energy costs by moving forward with the implementation of several energy conservation projects.** Beginning January 1, 2011, the College purchased 100% of its power from certified renewable energy sourced from wind renewables within the US, offsetting 8,696 metric tons of carbon and saving the College \$17,000 each year;
- **Maximizing seat capacity** in each academic course while reducing the number of overall course sections;

- **Suspending low-enrolled academic programs** (automotive technology, computer-aided design and nuclear engineering technology); and
- **Collaborating externally with other community colleges and agencies** to negotiate better pricing for technology, while coordinating internally on the purchase of office supplies.

Moreover, the College continues to develop innovative and entrepreneurial strategies for augmenting its revenue stream. In just the past few years, the College has undertaken a variety of initiatives to ensure its future financial stability. These include:

- Accelerating its private fund-raising program, with pledges towards the first year of a new campaign totally more than \$5M.
- Securing new privately funded initiatives, such as the **Gateway to College** effort;
- Expanding its **Virtual Campus** to improve students' online experience and grow revenue in adult markets;
- Creating a **Center for Entrepreneurial Studies** that offers fee-based incubator space and consulting;
- Increasing the number of articulation agreements offered in an effort to grow student enrollment through new pathways to completion;
- Expanding its **University Center** partnerships in order to offer bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs at College facilities, which increases enrollment while generating campus usage fees;
- Adopting a new lab fee approach to fund **The Culinary Arts Institute**;
- Offering financial literacy programs for students and employees while also circulating more information about financial aid to eligible students.

**Each of these actions reflects ongoing cost-containment strategies to ensure the long-term financial stability of the College (3FE 10).** Moreover, the re-allocation of resources is assessed in an ongoing way at quarterly financial reviews as well as with annual updates of the College's various strategic plans. Quarterly reviews of progress toward the College's strategic goals, discussed in the chapter on Standard 2, also confirm the assessment of institutional resource allocation.



The Working Group noted that the College develops and follows a ten-year facilities master plan to guide the management and renewal of its physical plant (3FE 5 and Figure 3.4). The Facilities Master Plan to 2022 is intended to be a working document; it is flexible and can be expanded and modified as conditions change and new trends emerge in the college competitive environment. The Board-approved plan is submitted to the State of Pennsylvania in an effort to secure funding approvals. The planning process is designed to be as inclusive as possible. The College's Board of Trustees has final master plan approval authority. The President's Cabinet, with additional representation from the facilities team, forms the Planning Steering Committee. The College communities at large, at both campuses, are engaged through open input sessions and master plan questionnaires. An interactive exercise was used to engage the Steering Committee, participants in the open forums, and the Trustees to solicit thoughts, perceptions and ideas about the strengths and opportunities for improvement for both campuses. Through this process, planning concepts are refined and a planning matrix, as shown in Figure 3.5, assists in prioritizing and sequencing implementation, each element of which ties to the College mission (3FE 6).



Figure 3.4: Diagram from the West Campus Master Plan. The ten-year Facilities Master Plan guides the development and renewal of the College's physical plant.

CENTRAL CAMPUS								
PHASE 1	Health Sciences Center	Vacated Science Center lecture/labs	Main Quadrangle Improvements Phase 1	Add traffic light & road improvements at Morris Road entrance	Remove service road south of College Hall and add new road & parking	Recreational Trail Phase 1	Remove Cathcart Annex	Wayfinding improvements
PHASE 2	Renovate remainder of Science Center including Theater Addition & Parking	New addition to Facilities Building & relinquish Quonset Hut	Recreational Trail Phase 2	Wayfinding improvements				
PHASE 3	Main Quadrangle Improvements Phase 2 (adjacent to Science Center)	Parking Lot Improvements - Lots 1, 2 & 3	New Academic Building feasibility study	Athletic Field Improvements Phase 1 (Baseball, Playfields & Parking)	Wayfinding improvements			
PHASE 4	Improve entry between ATC & Science Center	Athletic Field Improvements Phase 2 (Concessions & Team Rooms)	Improve bookstore exterior	Develop new linear quadrangle (main quad to Health Sciences Center)	New loop road behind Parkhouse Hall & Chiller Building	Wayfinding improvements		
PHASE 5	Athletic Field Improvements Phase 3 (Soccer turf & possible field lighting)	Wayfinding improvements						

Figure 3.5: Central Campus Facilities Planning Matrix. The College uses a ten-year "priorities and planning matrix" for facilities improvements at each campus. Here, the Central Campus matrix is shown.

**The Working Group found that the College's robust IT planning aligns with its budget process (3FE 6).** The Information Technology department within the College has continued to evolve with the changing higher education and technology landscape. A student technology fee supports upgrades and replace of technology software, hardware, and infrastructure. The College uses multiple IT planning tools, including an IT Strategic Plan and an Acquisition Plan, to anticipate and respond to technology needs. The Working Group found that IT positions were added or roles changed as necessary. As an example, a full-time Director of IT Security position was added to address the growing technological threats in higher education. As discussed in the chapter on Standard 2, various decision support tools were acquired to buttress data-driven analytics. The Center for Digital Education has recognized the College's achievements in the use of technology and ranked the College in the in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013. The College also continues to successfully attract technology-assisted grants. As an example, the College was one of seven Colleges to recently be awarded a Breakthrough Model Incubator grant in 2013 through **EDUCAUSE**. **Improved classroom and instructional technologies have also become widely adopted within the College since the 2010 PRR. All classrooms at all campuses now utilize electronic whiteboards (SmartBoards), projection, A/V, and wireless computer technologies (3FE 7).** Many faculty members use the Blackboard course management system not only to teach online classes but also to facilitate traditional face-to-face courses. Faculty members increasingly use presentation capture services, such as Camtasia or Garageband, to post lectures online. In some cases, faculty use live conferencing systems to include a remote student in a classroom. Faculty also pre-record lecture material that is available to students on-demand. Finally, the IT strategic vision continues to be governed by an active All-College Committee, the **Information Technology All-College Committee (ITACC)**. The committee, with representation from all constituent groups, recently completed a three-year IT strategic plan. **During the development of the strategic plan, the technology infrastructure, systems, and staffing were assessed by an external higher education technology consulting firm (3FE 10).** Feedback from this assessment was included in the development of the IT Strategic Plan 2013-2016.

**Grants and alternative means of funding are consistently sought from government and business sources to support the strategic priorities of the College, and grants funding has seen increasing success in the past few years.** Each year, a plan is developed to submit grant proposals and obtain grants that will support programs and projects not fundable by the College operational budget. This past academic year, more than 60 faculty and staff served on grant teams for both private grants and government grants, and 110 grant proposals/awards were managed, including those funded last year for use in this fiscal year. Altogether, the total grants and awards managed by the College is in the range of \$12M-\$14M, representing approximately 55 funders. Successful grants and grantwriters are celebrated at an annual Spring breakfast ceremony, expanded in AY12-13 to recognize private fundraising as well, and that lately honored:

- The Financial Aid staff, for receiving their first grant from the TD Bank Charitable Foundation to improve the financial literacy of students with high student-loan debt. The grant supports retention efforts by allowing the College to collaborate with an external partner, Clarifi, to offer one-on-one counseling sessions for students.

- The College’s Breakthrough Models Incubator project, awarded through **EDUCAUSE**, to improve retention and completion of students without overburdening the College’s resources.
- The **Gateway to College** project, which received funding from PECO to help meet both tuition and the day-to-day transportation and food costs of students who need to complete the program, and which manages a gift from Waste Management through the EITC program.
- A \$2.7 million National Science Foundation funded Northeast Biomanufacturing Center and Collaborative (**NBC2**) that runs from 2012-2013, and a supplemental \$148,000 NSF grant to host a Biofuels Workforce Summit that trained technicians in biofuels production and analysis.
- A \$1.2 million US Department of Labor **TAACCCT 2** partnership grant to support the College’s leadership of 14 Pennsylvania community colleges in efforts surrounding the implementation of a statewide Prior Learning Assessment platform.

**Finally, the Working Group noted that the College has renewed its commitment to the financial strength of its Foundation by creating a new Foundation campaign strategy (3FE 1).** The College embarked on a comprehensive fundraising campaign called “Futures Rising” in AY12-13. The campaign sought to make the College the most accessible pathway to success in the County by increasing the number of private scholarships for our students, which supports the College’s first strategic goal, “Expanding Access and Supporting Student Success.” Although the College offers students the best local value in higher education, many students still face economic barriers. Last year the College’s unmet student financial need was over \$20 million. Donor contributions to this Campaign are an investment in the individual students who seek an affordable education and good career, while supporting a pipeline of qualified graduates for high demand jobs in our region.

Preparation for the campaign included the hiring of additional professional fundraising staff, cleansing and enhancing the management of the development database, and enhancing reporting and tracking mechanisms. Efforts also included identifying, researching, assigning potential prospects while still cultivating new donors, recapturing past supporters, and creating a stewardship program that is both personal and sustainable. A fundraising consultant to determine the potential to raise additional funds from private sources conducted a feasibility study. A case for support was developed and the Foundation Board voted to launch the quiet phase of a comprehensive “Futures Rising” campaign. The College raised \$6M in the campaign’s “quiet phase” and recently launched the public phase of the campaign, with a goal of \$9M, which the Foundation expects to exceed by December 2015. The work of the Foundation plays a vital role in supporting student access and success, and this year 442 students were awarded scholarships totaling \$386,841, an 84% increase in the number of students and 43.8% increase in the amount of funds awarded.

## Opportunities

**Working Group 2 found that the College's multi-year planning process could be strengthened, particularly in the specific areas of position management and deferred maintenance.** Current processes are sufficient for planning short-term, non-compensation expenditures, but they are less agile than they might be for position management, which accounts for over 80% of the College' budget. The Working Group highlighted some concerns about the tools available for this type of budget forecasting (for example current tools, Ellucian Colleague and Microsoft Excel, both have functionality gaps, the former in terms of its ability to help users document the reasoning behind the budget numbers, and the latter in its ability to allow users to easily aggregate and disseminate information), but noted that the concerns went beyond the acquisition of new software tools. Better processes would assist the College in forecasting future positions, determining future pay ranges, defining budget projection rules and accounting accurately for future position vacancies. It would assist the College in forward thinking about salaries, benefits, and employer-paid taxes in the five-year plan.

Additionally, the Working Group noted that improved and nimble long-range forecasting processes might also help better anticipate the maintenance of the College's physical facilities over time. For example, the College should develop a more robust deferred maintenance plan. This plan should include a ten-year furniture replacement strategy to update classroom furniture on a cyclical basis. **Working Group 2 suggests, therefore, that the Finance and Administration unit continue to refine its planning processes to allow for nimble long-term forecasting, particularly in the areas of position management and deferred maintenance.**

### Suggestion for Improvement

- 3. The Finance and Administration unit should continue to refine its planning processes to allow for nimble long-term forecasting, particularly in the areas of position management and deferred maintenance.**  
(Theme 3: Continuous Institutional Renewal)



# Standard 4: Leadership and Governance



## Standard 4: Leadership and Governance



### Board Advocacy in Support of Access and Success

In the headnote to the Fundamental Elements governing Standard 4 of The Characteristics of Excellence, MSCHE (2006) notes the ability of a governing body not only to ensure strong financial management, but to seek “opportunities to advocate actively for external support” and to “assist in generating resources needed to sustain and improve the institution, as appropriate” (p. 13). In response to a major cut in county funding, in 2012 the MCCC Board of Trustees, chaired by MCCC alumnus Michael D’Aniello (1976), created an *ad hoc* committee charged with investigating the history of legislative authority as well as the County’s commitment to past funding of the College; it then developed a series of strategies to enhance legislative advocacy for the College within the Montgomery County community. These strategies provided an appropriate framework for the Board to lobby Commonwealth and County representatives to fund the mission of the College in an ongoing and unified way.



Figure 4.1: The Board of Trustees. Members of the Board celebrate the Class of 2013 at graduation.

### Background and Overview

*N.B. Compliance items are indicated in bold and matched with the corresponding Fundamental Element (FE); see the Accreditation Readiness Roadmap for specific documents evidencing that compliance.*

**In accordance with the Community College Act of 1963, a fifteen-person Board of Trustees, whose members are appointed by the Montgomery County Commissioners to six-year renewable terms, governs the College (4FE 4 and Figure 4.1). County Commissioners appoint board members who reflect the public’s interest, demonstrate a commitment to the mission of the College, and who have the expertise necessary to assure the College’s fiduciary responsibilities can**

NAME	OCCUPATION	TERM EXPIRES
Michael D’Aniello, Board Chair	Attorney	2019
Andrew B. Cantor, Board Vice Chair	Attorney	2015
Regina M. Lowrie, Board Treasurer	Mortgage Banker	2015
Gertrude Mann, Board Secretary	Retired Account Executive	2017
Marcel L. Groen, Board Assistant Secretary	Attorney, Fox Rothschild LLP*	2015
Margot Clark	Retired	2019
Susan Amhold	Education	2017
Ellen Toplin	Business & Marketing Advisor	2015
Sean Kilkenny	Attorney	2019
Geoffrey D. Brandon	Senior VP, Banking, TD Bank**	2017
Eric Kretschman	Managing Director	2014
Moon Y. Ahn	Attorney	2015
J. Edmund Mullin	Attorney	2015
Richard Montalbano	Health Care	2017
John Rafferty	PA Senator	2019
Charles Kahn, Jr.	Owner, Real Estate Company	Emeritus

\* Fox Rothschild is the College’s Legal Counsel; Mr. Groen does not represent the College as Legal Counsel.

\*\* The College’s General Accounts are with TD Bank.

Figure 4.2: List of Board Members with Affiliation and Term. The current Board of Trustees includes County members with educational, industry, legal, financial, and government backgrounds.

**be fulfilled (4FE 4).** The Board sets policies that affect curriculum, student access and success, and College administration; approves and monitors annual operating and capital budgets; sets tuition and fees; hires and evaluates the President; oversees property management, and approves agreements with outside vendors. The Board, through its agent, the President, also **certifies that accreditation standards are met and communicates changes in accredited status, as needed (4FE 6).** A list of Board members, with their occupations and term expiration year listed, appears as Figure 4.2.

**The Board elects its chair and other officers annually,** in accordance with published policies regarding Board Operations (4FE 1 and 2.3). **Dr. Karen Stout, the President of the College, reports to the Board, acts as its agent, and, as the Board's Chief Executive Officer, serves as a non-voting member who may not hold a Board office (4FE 5 and 11).** The Board uses a committee structure to consider financial, physical plant, curriculum, and personnel issues. **Board members are not compensated for their service (4FE 7)** and meet monthly in public sessions from September through June.

The Board is committed to the principles of integrity, good faith, fair dealing, and professional accountability. **It approves all College policies and procedures, while assigning authority and accountability for the development of policies and procedures to the President, her staff, and the four All-College Governance Committees (4FE 2.2).** **Board-approved policies are publicly available on the College website** and pertain to the mission and goals of the College, academic affairs, student affairs, administration, and Human Resources, as well as to the Board's own operations (4FE 2.1). The Board receives a report from the President, organized by strategic goals, on a monthly basis, and **uses those reports to assess the effectiveness of the institution and its leadership on an ongoing basis (4FE 10).** The Board also **assists the College in generating the resources needed to sustain and improve it,** particularly through the monthly governance recommendations of its subcommittee on Finance and its role in supporting the Foundation's Annual and Capital Campaigns (4FE 9). **All members of the Board of Trustees complete a self-assessment annually. The self-assessment form and the Board By-Laws were revised in 2012; they are available upon request from the Office of the President (4FE 10).**

**A conflict of interest policy guides members with respect to the outside interests, concerns or relationships held by a member of the Board of Trustees (4FE 7).** **Members of the Board, the President, and the Vice-Presidents are required disclose potential conflicts of interest** through the completion and submission of a written questionnaire on an annual basis, and any conflicts are subject to Board review. The Board also recently updated the conflict of interest policy for College employees and instituted an anti-nepotism policy for the College at large.

Beyond the Board level, **the College's governance structure integrates faculty, students, administrators, and staff** (Figure 4.3). The Faculty Union, via a contract negotiated between the administration and the union leadership, sets out faculty involvement in the governance of the College and stipulates both the number, terms of service, and membership of the four All-College Committees (The Curriculum and Academic Affairs Committee, the Student Life Committee, the Distance Education Committee, and the Information Technology Advisory Committee). The Provost has responsibility for the management of the governance structure. Each committee generally comprises an *ex-officio* administrator at the Vice-Presidential level,

three full-time administrative staff members, (at least one of whom is a Dean), six full-time teaching faculty members (one from each academic division and one from West campus), one counselor or advisor, one librarian, a part-time faculty member, and, when appropriate to the charge of the committee, between one and four students. Full-time faculty members are elected by their division and serve two-year terms, while the Provost appoints part-time faculty, administrators, and staff. The Student Government Association selects students to serve. The Provost recommends annual goals and yearly charges, which are then accepted through a vote by committee members; committees may add additional charges. The Provost meets regularly with the Governance Chairs and other Vice Presidents to review progress towards goals, to assess resources, and move issues towards resolution. Agenda are sent out to the College community prior to each meeting and minutes for each are posted to the portal; as well, each month, a governance newsletter communicates All-College Committee discussions. **Finally, annual governance charges are assessed at the end of the academic year and integrated into the Board of Trustees' Annual Report (4FE 12).**

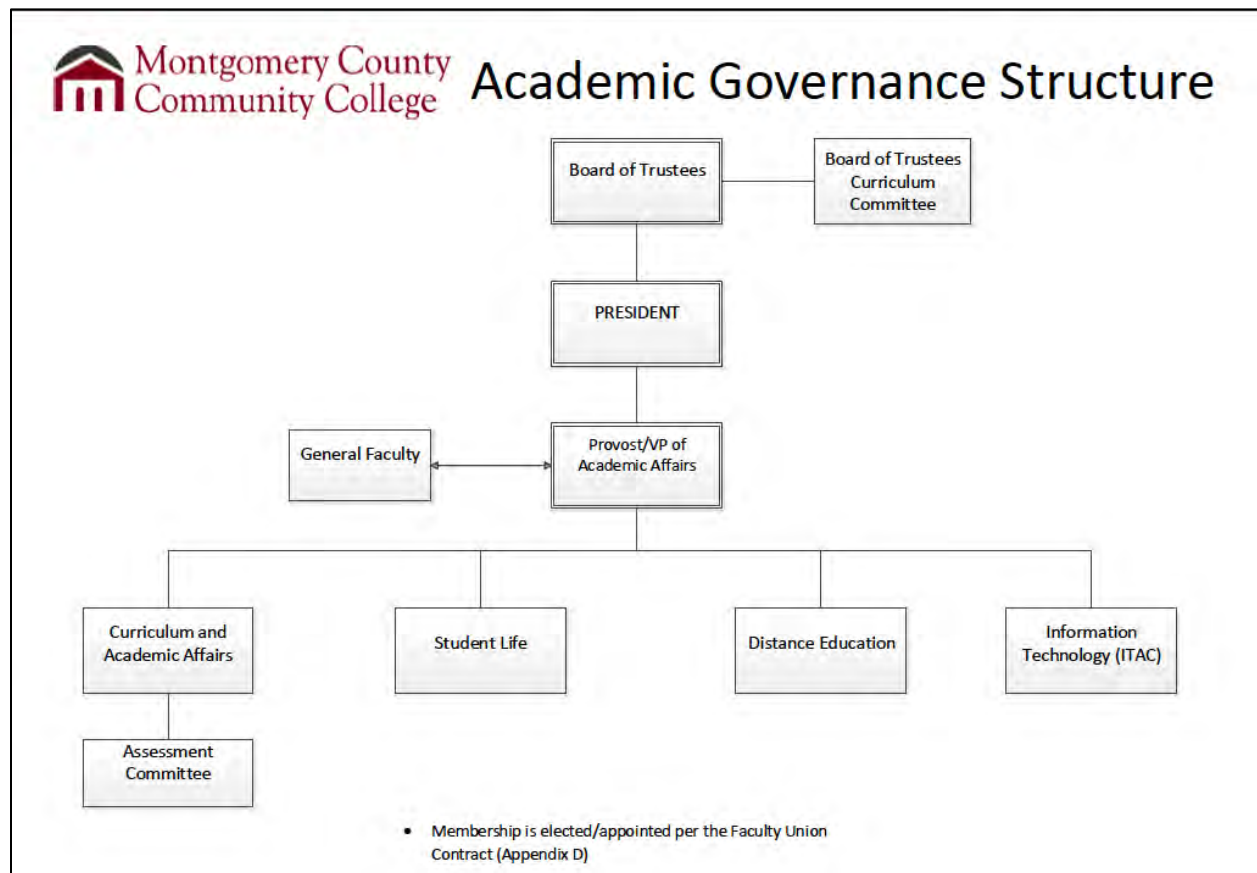


Figure 4.3: Academic Governance Structure: Four All-College Committees participate in the College's academic governance.

The Student Government Association (SGA), chartered by the Board, provides leadership, guidance, and oversight to all student clubs and assures timely responses to issues raised by the student body. The SGA, which comprises two separate student governments, one at Central Campus and one at West, represents the student body on College committees and, when requested, at College events and programs. It also encourages activities of a social, cultural, and civic nature on all campuses, charters clubs, and oversees the Student Activities funds that are distributed to clubs. Its constitution divides the SGA into a four-member executive branch and a fifteen-member senate, with all members elected from the pool of eligible students. **Members of the SGA serve on the Inter-Club Council, the President's Leadership Council, and a variety of College committees, including the Auxiliary Services Committee, the All-College Distance Education Committee, All-College Information Technology Advisory Committee, the Safety and Wellness Committee, the All-College Student Life Committee, and the Traffic Appeals Committee, and the President's Climate Council (4FE 3).** Each year the **SGA leaders at both campuses develop and share a "Top 10" list** with the President's Leadership Council. Student leaders work with College staff over the course of the academic year to address these concerns; they use the last Council meeting of the academic year to review progress and to begin to develop the "Top 10" list for the incoming SGA leaders **(4FE 12).**

### Self-Study Methodology

During the Self-Study, Working Group 3 researched how effectively the governing body worked to advance the College's mission and strategic goals and explored what assessment measures are used to ensure that governance processes have integrity. Working Group 3 also analyzed how changes in shared governance at the College since the 2005 Self-Study have affected the College's mission and how well constituent groups (including the student government and **All-College Governance Committees**) execute roles and responsibilities. To complete their research, they interviewed key College leaders and consulted committee minutes, student and community surveys, and a variety of other documents.

### Findings and Discussion

#### Strengths

**The Working Group found that the Board is appropriately engaged at the policy and governance level in the College's institutional initiatives, programs, and events; it is effective in planning, evolving, and advancing the College's mission and strategic goals.** Figure 4.4 provides representative examples of how the Board and the President have worked through the governance process to accomplish each of the six strategic goals.

Strategic Goal	Noteworthy Accomplishments Facilitated by Board Support and Review
1. Increase student access and success	In May 2014, the Board created an <i>ad hoc</i> committee on advancement to explore and consider changes in enrollment strategies, including but not limited to recruiting, enrolling and supporting students, including those from traditionally underrepresented populations, as well as the promotion and development of new and/or improving existing delivery models. The Committee shall also consider funding issues, like enhanced fees and pricing strategies for new and high-cost curricula, as well as develop recommendations for private funding of scholarships to assist student affordability.
2. Build curricular relevance, innovation in delivery and supportive faculty development systems	Each of the following has required work by the All-College Governance committees and the related Board subcommittees, followed by full Board review and approval: <b>Academic Program Report (APR)</b> redesign, <b>Program Analysis Report (PAR)</b> redesign (formerly Annual Program Report Cards), enhanced governance operations, Academic Affairs unit redesign to support integrated (credit-noncredit) student pathways, renewed and rejuvenated Academic Program Advisory Committees, a new Faculty Evaluation System, articulation (K-12 to higher education), Dual Enrollment, University Center expansion
3. Develop an engaged community	In response to a major cut in county funding, in 2012 the Board created an <i>ad hoc</i> committee charged with investigating the history of legislative authority as well as the County's commitment to past funding of the College; it then developed a series of strategies to enhance legislative advocacy for the College within the Montgomery County community.
4. Create a sense of place to support learning	With the Board's financial and operational oversight, since 2005, every major building on both campuses has been renovated (in full or partially) or has acquired funding for renovations (see Chapter 3). Current renovation plans include the establishment of a new Health Sciences Center on the site of the current Physical Education Building at Central Campus.
5. Adopt an entrepreneurial approach	The Board supported the financial planning for the new Culinary Arts Institute and was involved in discussions regarding its new business model.
6. Create a high-performance culture	The Board has reviewed and approved new policies about conflicts of interest, clean air, sexual discrimination (harassment, violence and retaliation), as well continuing its regular review of existing policies (procurement, acceptable use of technology, right-to-know, among others). Policy consistency and relevance are evidence of its ongoing responsibility for a high-performance culture.

*Figure 4.4: Evidence of Board Effectiveness. Above are selected examples of Board effectiveness across each of the six strategic goals.*

Secondly, the Working Group found that, since 2010, significant improvements have made the College's financial governance processes even stronger than previously noted. These improvements reflect the Board's ongoing oversight and ensure that its governance has integrity. Examples include:

- Significant enhancements to procedural and accounting infrastructures resulted in unqualified audit opinions for fiscal years 2011, 2012 and 2013. In addition to the unqualified opinions, these external audits were completed with no management letter or constructive comments from the College's audit firm.



- In response to cuts in County funding in 2012, the Board created an *ad hoc* Committee on Future Funding to address the implications of County cuts and to take on a more active advocacy role. The Board submitted to County Commissioners a discussion paper, which put forward strong reasons for restoring funding to the College. County cuts subsequently stabilized, although original funding levels were not restored.
- Revisions to College's Chart of Accounts, resulting in an infrastructure that better supports the College's capacity for financial reporting and analysis. These revisions are still ongoing at the time of this writing.

Each of these instances reflects a commitment to fiduciary oversight and accountability at the Board level.

**Finally, the Working Group found that changes in shared governance at the College since 2005 have helped the College develop a governance process that has more clarity, order, and transparency (4FE 12).** These changes standardize some *ad hoc* procedures and have been made in response to calls for clarity and communication. For example, all four All-College Committees now have faculty chairs, instead of administrative heads, and follow rules of order. Membership and chairs are finalized the spring previous to the start of the new academic year. When making specific recommendations, the Committees take votes on key issues. The four governance committees share agendas and minutes on the College portal. Each committee now has an email address to make it easier for the community to contact the committees, and

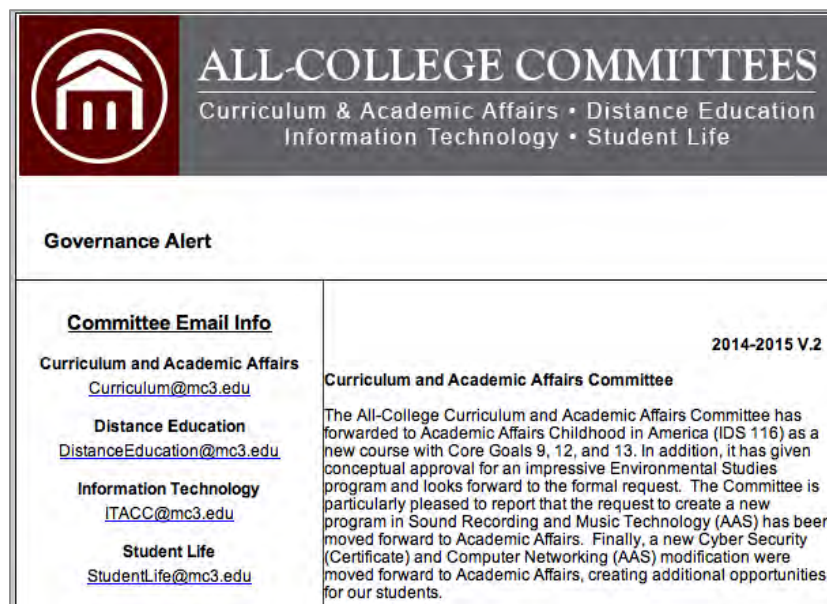


Figure 4.5: Governance Alert Newsletter. New email blasts from the Provost's Office communicate Shared Governance.

each committee has a distinctive email template to inform the College community of the agenda for upcoming meetings and the current committee members. These communications are sent from the committee's email address so they are more noticeable to the community. There is a monthly Governance Alert prepared by the faculty chairs of the four All-College Governance Committees and sent by the Provost to the College community, using the same style of email template as email communications from the governance committees (Figure 4.5).

The All-College Curriculum and Academic Affairs Committee, which had been criticized by members of the faculty community in the past for its complicated administrative processes, has worked hard to simplify its governance procedures and better communicate its processes. The Committee created a new portal site that makes the pathway transparent for approval of new

and modified courses and programs, with simplified forms now submitted digitally. The portal site also links to resources needed for researching curricular changes, including the full directory of course offerings at the College, the Core Course Master List, and the Program of Study maps. The revised portal won “honorable mention” for Innovation of the Year. For course requiring just small modifications, the Committee and Provost instituted a new “non-substantive change” process, through which 97 courses were updated in AY13-14, saving much time and paperwork. (“Non-substantive” changes include, for example, textbook revisions, changes to the sequence of topics, or changes to course learning activities.) As well, the Provost has integrated Governance Committee presence into faculty and division meetings and those meetings are now used to discuss proposed policies and procedures. A standing subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee, the Academic Assessment Committee, has been reorganized with new leadership and membership as well.

During the time these governance improvements have been underway, faculty members have discussed at length whether the current governance process is adequate. Interested faculty members created an inquiry team and explored the formation of an Academic Council or Faculty Senate. On February 25, 2013, a faculty inquiry team issued a report titled, “Formation of an Academic Council,” in which, after summarizing the findings of its literature review, faculty survey, and open meetings with the College community, it put forward the possibility of creating either an Academic Council or Faculty Senate. A proposal to advance the Council’s creation was put forward at a subsequent faculty meeting, and discussions about its possible structure are ongoing. The Working Group, however, did not note a strong resolution from the faculty to move any alternative governance structures forward at this point.

## Opportunities

Much improvement has occurred in the coordination of governance committees over the past few years, and Working Group 3 found that faculty and staff have high expectations about the depth of communication and collaboration during the shared governance process. When those expectations are not met, some faculty and support staff (see Appendix 4.1) report feeling under-consulted on important policy decisions. “Inconsistent” is the word that was most often emphasized by the Working Group when discussing this concern. For example, while broad input was sought during the development of the new student printing policy and the implementation of a revised faculty advising commitment, other items were not put forward for initial feedback. The development of a new Winter Session pilot was often cited to Working Group 3 as an example of an important academic matter undertaken without sufficient initial input. While the Working Group members recognized that the pace of decision-making in academe is often too slow to keep up with a rapidly changing fiscal environment, many found the abrupt implementation of this new academic initiative, which was announced to coordinators in September 2013, with courses open for enrollment in October 2013, without apparent initial discussion with the College community, surprising. In another example, while the development of the AY14-15 and AY15-16 academic calendars followed the governance process, changes to the usual calendar were not communicated effectively. When some realized that Spring 2014 semester would start one week earlier than it has historically started (that is, before Martin Luther King Jr. Day), many were caught unaware. As a result, the Provost asked the chairs of the All-College Committees to take the Academic Calendar back through the governance process a second time. (See Appendix 4.2 for results of a Curriculum Committee survey about the

calendar decision.) Each of these examples points to the need for additional effort in garnering feedback prior to sending a new initiative or revised policy through the governance process, although the examples also show a willingness by the whole College community to work together to address ongoing issues.

The Steering Committee did, however, note that difficulties with collaboration and communication are also directly related to discrepancies in the level of committee service and committee involvement required from the faculty, which is further discussed in Chapter 10. (See Suggestion 10.b.) A more equitable process for distributing unelected committee service, supported by strong faculty leadership, will continue to ameliorate communication issues.

To help coordinate the work of governance committees and to facilitate College communication, the President organized a new group, the Shared Governance Committee (initially, the Committee on Committees), to meet regularly to coordinate the activities of the four All-College Governance Committees. Membership includes the faculty co-chairs of the four governance committees and their respective *ex officio* members. This new group has played a role in organizing the communication of governance updates to the College community and has generally been seen as an improvement in communication about the governance structure of the College.

However, it is not clear that this type of coordination alone will promote the communication and collaboration that many at the College feel is necessary early in any new initiative process. Working Group 3 found that the College has a need for regular and broad input all stakeholders on significant initiatives at the very beginning of a new discussion; existing governance pathways or meeting calendars may need to be modified to allow quicker responses when the timing of decisions about new initiatives is critical. **The College should ensure that new initiatives and policy revisions are undertaken within timeframes that allow faculty, students, support staff, and administrators to communicate and collaborate in an effective manner.**

### Suggestion for Improvement

- 4. The College should ensure that new initiatives and policy revisions are undertaken within timeframes that allow faculty, students, support staff, and administrators to communicate and collaborate in an effective manner.**

(Theme 2: Collaboration and Communication)

### References

Middle States Commission on Higher Education. (2006). *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education: Eligibility Requirements and Standards for Accreditation*. (12<sup>th</sup> ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.msche.org/publications/CHX06060320124919.pdf>



# Standard 5: Administration

## Standard 5: Administration



### Leading the National Conversation on College Opportunity

On August 12, 2014, President Dr. Karen A. Stout returned to the White House to continue a national dialogue on college readiness, a conversation that continued on January 16, 2014, during the College Opportunity Summit convened by U.S. President Barack Obama (Figure 5.1). That summit saw approximately 140 leaders from higher education, philanthropic organizations, businesses and local and state governments, launch a plan of action for increasing college opportunity for low-income and disadvantaged students. The College's commitments include three specific initiatives aimed at improving access for low-income and disadvantaged students. These include redesigning student entry and advising processes, developing a multi-platform model for student engagement, and expanding its minority student mentoring initiative. Dr.

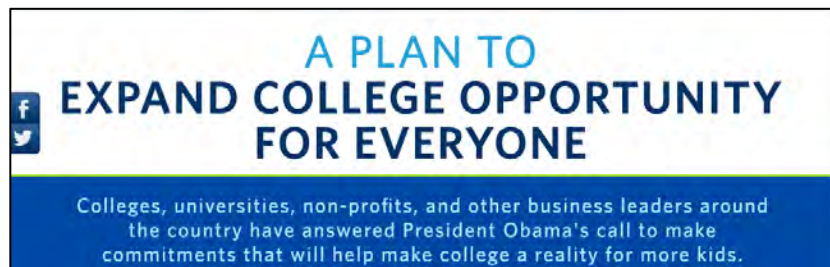


Figure 5.1: Participation in the White House Summit. Dr. Stout was one of 140 higher education leaders invited to participate in the 2014 College Opportunity Summit, which resulted in this White House Plan to Expand College Opportunity for Everyone.

Stout called the session “a great opportunity to build on the momentum the Administration put forward to serve low-income students and spotlight and reaffirm the important role of community colleges around developmental education.”

All three commitments are part of the College's overarching Student Success Initiative, which works to expand access to higher education and increase student success through process improvements and support strategies that reduce the barriers for students to complete their education. In 2011, MCCC was designated an Achieving the Dream Leader College, one of an elite group of 73 community colleges across the country that have demonstrated committed leadership, use of evidence to improve programs and services, broad engagement, and institutional improvement (Figure 5.2). The College was recertified as a Leader College in 2014.

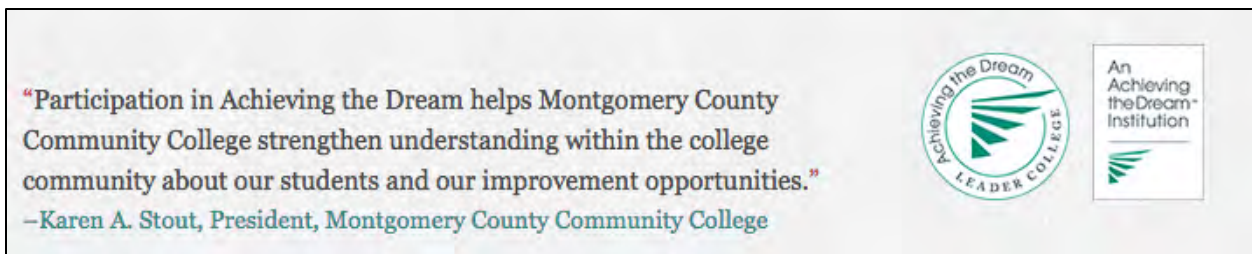


Figure 5.2: An Achieving the Dream Leader College. The Achieving the Dream website quotes President Stout on improvement opportunities for Community Colleges.



The impact of Dr. Stout's leadership extends nationally, evidenced by her selection to participate in the White House's College Opportunity initiatives. A passionate advocate for community colleges, Dr. Stout serves as Chair of the President's Advisory Board to the Community College Research Center at Columbia University Teacher's College. She previously served as a member of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Board of Directors and as co-chair of the American Association of Community College's (AACC) 21st-Century Initiative Steering Committee. Dr. Stout's service extends well beyond the College; she was a member of the American Association of Community College's Board of Directors, and sat on the board of the Voluntary Framework for Accountability. In 2012, Dr. Stout earned the CEO Award for the North East Region from the Trustees of The Association of Community Colleges. Dr. Stout holds a doctorate in Educational Leadership and a bachelor's degree in English from University of Delaware, as well as a master's degree in Business Administration from University of Baltimore.

### Background and Overview

*N.B. Compliance items are indicated in bold and matched with the corresponding Fundamental Element (FE); see the Accreditation Readiness Roadmap for specific documents evidencing that compliance.*

The College is fortunate to have seasoned administrators in key leadership positions. Not only does **Dr. Stout, who has served as President and the Chief Executive Officer since 2001, reporting to the Board, (5FE 1 and 2), have extensive academic and administrative experience, so does her direct staff (5FE 3).** The College's Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, Dr. Victoria Bastecki-Perez, was appointed as Chief Academic Officer in 2011, after 14 years of service in various roles at the College, including Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, academic dean, program director, and faculty member in the Health Sciences division. Prior to her time at the College, Dr. Bastecki-Perez held a full-time faculty appointment at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Steady Moono, the Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer of West Campus, has more than nine years of administrative experience at the College, is highly involved in the greater Pottstown community, and has co-authored a textbook titled *Thriving in the Community College and Beyond*. Dr. Celeste Schwartz, Vice President of Information Technology, is not only an alumna of the College, but has served in leadership roles for 20 of her 44 years at the College and is active in Educause. During Dr. Schwartz's tenure as Vice President, the College has consistently ranked among the top five community colleges in the nation for the use of technology (according to surveys conducted by the Center for Digital Education). Dr. Kathrine Swanson, Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, has served the College since 2005 and, before that, as Dean of Student Affairs and Director of Recruitment and Retention at Collin County Community College in Texas. Mike Yosifon, a seasoned community college leader, currently serves as Interim Vice President of Finance and Administration. Mr. Yosifon brings experienced, stable and thoughtful leadership to the Finance area, and he has served as interim Vice President for Finance at the College in the past. Mrs. Arline Stephan, the Interim Vice President for Development and External Relations joined the College in 2012. Mrs. Stephan is experienced in cultivating donor relationships and managing capital campaigns. **Figure 5.3 illustrates the reporting structure of the College's Administrative leadership. As well, the College has a clearly defined organizational structure in place across all units, as evidenced in the organizational charts compiled as Appendix 5.1 (5FE 6).**

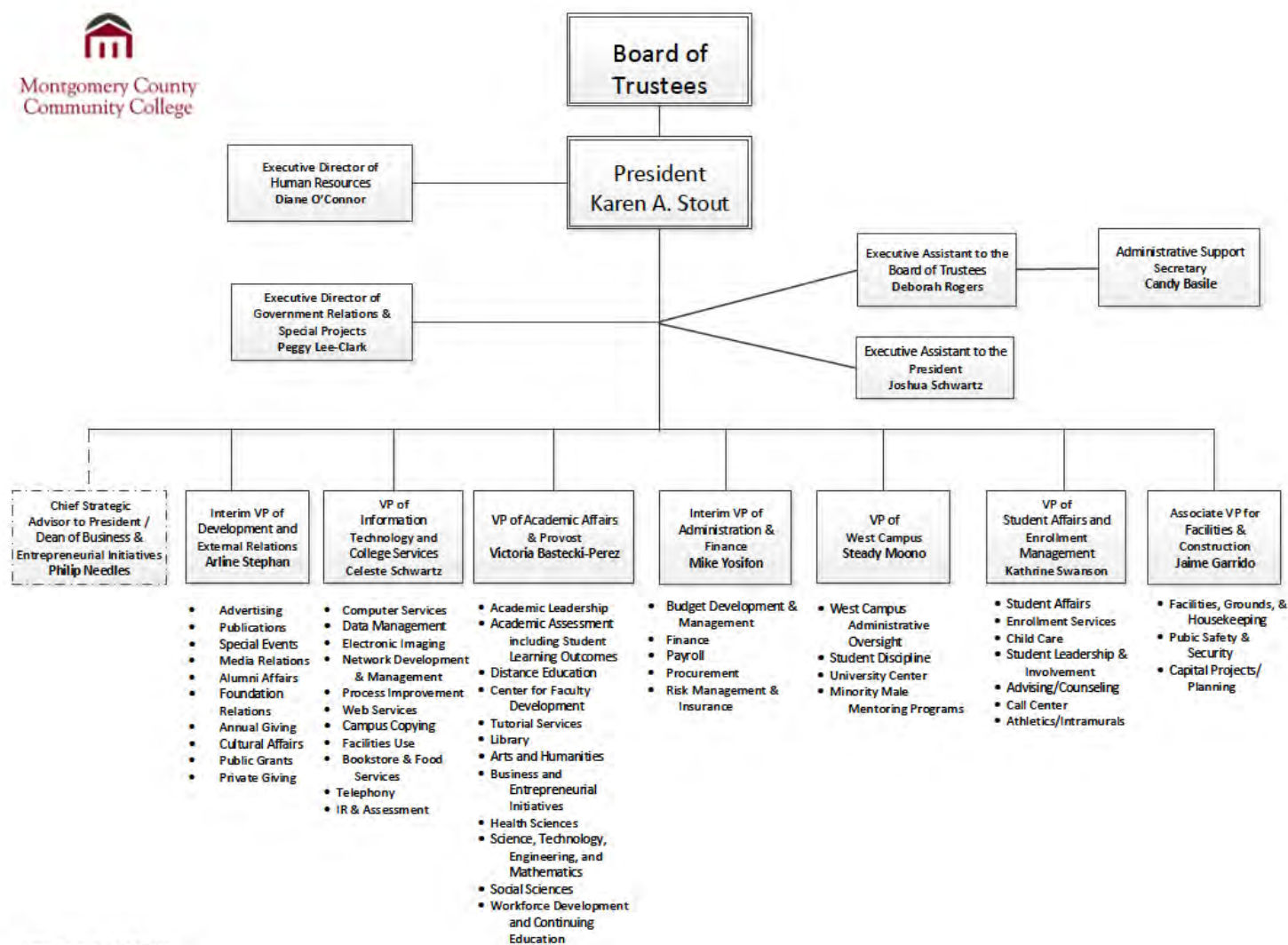


Figure 5.3: The College's Administrative Structure. The College's administrative structure is divided into seven units, each reporting to a Vice-President: Development and External Relations, Information Technology and College Services, Academic Affairs, Finance and Administration, the West Campus, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, and Facilities and Construction

**Changes within the College's administrative structure since the 2010 Periodic Review Report evidence the College's ongoing assessment of its effectiveness (5FE 7).** The most significant example of this assessment is the recent re-organization of Academic Affairs. The incoming Provost, Dr. Bastecki-Perez, sought to update the organization of responsibilities across her division in order to better achieve the College's mission of increased student access and success. As a result of this revision, non-credit course offerings are no longer segregated into a division separate from credit-bearing courses (Figure 5.4). Traditionally, Community Colleges organize life-long learning or continuing education offerings in a unit distinct from academic offerings in related disciplines. For example, the College's non-credit computer certification courses used to be managed through the Dean of Workforce Development and Continuing Education. After the reorganization, these courses are managed under a Program Director who

reports to the academic Dean of STEM. In the same way, non-credit culinary arts classes are currently integrated under the Director of the Culinary Arts Institute, who, in turn, reports to the Dean of Business and Entrepreneurial Initiatives. Under this new structure, academic deans and administrative program directors are expected to develop and manage an integrated credit and non-credit portfolio. The resulting integration better facilitates a student's pathway from continuing education through the attainment of a professional specialty certificate or the completion of a credit-bearing degree.

Academic Support	Arts and Humanities Division	Business and Entrepreneurial Initiatives Division	Health Sciences Division	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Division	Social Sciences Division	
Libraries Tutorial Services -Course-Based Learning -Tutoring	<u>Disciplines:</u> Art, Communication and Media Arts, Speech, Dance, English, ESL, Music, Philosophy, Reading, Strategies for College Success, Theatre, World Languages & Cultures  <u>Initiatives:</u> Study Abroad	<u>Disciplines:</u> Accounting, Office Administration/Virtual Assistance, Culinary Arts, Economics, Entrepreneurship, Hospitality, Management, Marketing, Real Estate  <u>Initiatives:</u> Center for Entrepreneurial Studies Center for Workforce Development The Culinary Arts Institute Virtual Campus	<u>Disciplines:</u> Dental Hygiene, Exercise Science and Wellness, Medical Assisting, Medical Laboratory Technology, Health Care Professions, Nursing, Radiography, Surgical Technology, Physical Therapy (planned)	<u>Disciplines:</u> Astronomy, Biology, Biotechnology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Engineering Science, Engineering Technology, Environmental Science, Environmental Technology, Geology, Mathematics, Physics	<u>Disciplines:</u> Anthropology, Criminal Justice, Counseling, Education, Emergency Management, Fire Science, Geography, History, Human Services, Interdisciplinary Studies, Politics, Psychology, Sociology <u>Initiatives:</u> POWER Program	
	<u>Initiatives:</u> Academic Camps Ceramics English Language Learners Korean Language & Culture Music Lessons Performing Arts World Languages & Culture	<u>Professional and Business Development:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Culinary (+ enthusiasts)</li> <li>Montgomery County Woman-Owned Business Network</li> <li>ServSafe Training and Certification</li> <li>Starting a Successful Woman-Owned Business</li> </ul> <u>Initiatives:</u> Academic Camps	<u>Career Training Programs:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clinical Coordinator</li> <li>Dental Hygiene - Local Anesthesia</li> <li>Nurse Reactivation and Nurse Refresher</li> <li>Pharmacy Technician</li> </ul> <u>Initiatives:</u> Academic Camps	<u>Computer Training Programs:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A+</li> <li>AutoCAD</li> <li>CCNA</li> <li>CCNA Security</li> <li>CCNA Voice</li> <li>Digital Design</li> <li>Health Information Technology</li> <li>Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS)</li> <li>Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate</li> <li>MCSE</li> <li>Quickbooks</li> </ul> <u>Initiatives:</u> Academic Camps	<u>Career Training Programs:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defensive Driving</li> <li>Drivers Education</li> <li>Emergency Medical Services</li> <li>Municipal Police Basic Training (ACT 120)</li> <li>Municipal Police In-Service (ACT 180)</li> <li>Notary Public</li> <li>Paramedic</li> <li>PASS (bouncers)</li> <li>Private Security Academy</li> </ul> <u>Initiatives:</u> Academic Camps	<b>WDCE (noncredit)</b> <u>Grants:</u> -TACT 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CNC Machine Operator</li> <li>HVAC</li> <li>Industrial Machinery Mechanic</li> <li>Medical Billing &amp; Coding</li> <li>Warehouse &amp; Logistics Technician</li> <li>Waste Water Treatment Operator</li> </ul> -Business Leadership Events -JRWA
						<b>e-Learning Flexible Learning</b>

Figure 5.4: Academic Affairs Re-Organization. In 2012, Academic Affairs reorganized to include non-credit offerings within academic divisions.

Other areas of the new Academic Affairs structure are now equally forward-looking. Computer and Information Science, formerly part of the Business division of the College, was moved into the STEM division, where it fits better with the expertise of the faculty; the former Business and Computer Science division was renamed the Business and Entrepreneurial Initiatives division (**BEI**). The Dean of BEI now manages both the Virtual Campus initiative and the new Culinary Arts Institute, both of which have the goal of financial self-sustainability. The Division of Health Sciences provides interdivisional support to the Human Services and **POWER** programs, which reside within the BEI division. Finally, the separate areas of the Library and Tutorial Services were integrated under an Academic Support unit.

The Academic Affairs re-organization was, at first, controversial, and the initial proposal, which differed from the final structure, provoked extensive discussion and debate from faculty and staff. A series of intensive discussions with the Provost at faculty meetings and during focus



group sessions helped the Provost vet the structure and make responsive changes. After five iterations of revision and College-wide dialogue between December 2011 and March 2012, the Provost implemented the revised structure. **This case study illustrates the College's progress towards operational improvement in administrative areas as well as its use of college-wide discussion to vet proposed changes.**

## Self-Study Methodology

During the Self-Study, Working Group 3 was charged with investigating how the responsibilities of the College's administrative staff align with its mission and how effectively these duties foster quality improvement. In addition, Working Group 3 evaluated whether operational and strategic decisions are consistent with College policies. The Group further explored how assessment has been used to validate those decisions and determine the effects of administrative changes. Working Group 3 researched what processes were in place to ensure that sufficient resources (staff, equipment, other resources) are made available once institutional priorities and goals have been established and what evidence demonstrates that these processes are successful. Finally, the Group was charged with two additional items: researching opportunities for the professional development of administrative staff and assessing the level of collaboration and communication among faculty, staff, and administration.

## Findings and Discussion

### Strengths

**The Working Group affirmed that evidence shows operational and strategic decisions consistent with College policies, procedures, and legal requirements (5FE 5); this consistency is a strength of the College.** Two case studies illustrate this finding, one concerning student financial policy changes and one concerning academic program review. First, in April 2011, the Board approved specific changes to the Tuition Refund policy. These changes not only align the refund process with legal revisions to the Pennsylvania Department of Education requirements, but they also ensured that student transactions are fair and consistent. Specifically, the administration updated protocols for the operation of the Tuition Refund Appeals Committee. Secondly, changes to the Criminal Justice Program illustrate how the College's academic review complies with new **Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee (TAOC)** requirements from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Criminal Justice (CJS) program responded to the TAOC requirements by adding three courses to the existing program, deleting one course and consolidating two courses into a single new course. After ensuring compliance with state transfer requirements, additional program modifications were made to help students meet the College's own General Education competencies. The program was then reconfigured from an AAS degree to a transfer-oriented AS degree. Program changes to comply with state requirements are not always this extensive, but this example shows the College's commitment of maintaining transfer pathways in changing educational environments.

**The Working Group also found that College's new **Performance Management Process (PMP)**, implemented in 2013-14, helps closely align the administrative staff's individual duties and responsibilities with the College's mission and strategic goals (5FE 5).**

PMP helps develop a culture that nurtures innovation, leads to continuous improvement, and rewards high performance—all while meeting the College’s access and success goals for students. PMP also allows the administrators to establish cascading goals to align staff to institutional initiatives stemming from the strategic goals, while also establishing individualized performance expectations. **PMP ensures consistency and equity in the evaluation process, which results in qualified staff in appropriate functions (5FE 4).** As well, PMP allows human resources to capture data based on goal alignment, **facilitating assessment (5FE 7).**

During the first year of implementation, the College found that 61% of all administrative performance goals are aligned to a department, division, or College-wide strategic goal. The remaining 39% of the goals are individually based, and reflect individual expectations, priorities, or professional development goals. The data from this year will be used as a baseline, and the College will use these assumptions to assess growth in alignment in coming years. Human Resources will also analyze the data to determine the optimal level of connection to the College’s strategic initiatives.

PMP also encourages administrative staff to agree on the values expressed in the workplace and in the processes they are responsible for implementing. Focus group and staff discussions arrived at the following values for the College administration: “clarity and focus,” “feedback and coaching,” “consistency,” “equity and accountability,” “recognition” and “talent management and professional development.” The AY13-14 goal was to improve the practice of these values by 20% across administrative processes. To date, the PMP administrators met this goal, and have seen significant improvement in all areas, with an average of a +20.11% change during the first six months of implementation (Figure 5.5).

Value	Description	Summer	Fall	Winter	% Change Fall to Winter	% Change Summer to Winter
Clarity and Focus	To provide a clear set of expectations related to daily performance standards and behaviors. Allows for the prioritization of critical objectives of the college, unit, department and/or individual.	3.36	3.68	3.69	+0.3%	+9.8%
Feedback and Coaching	Promotes and directs systems to ensure regular feedback and communication. Supported by strategies to development skills sets needed for current and future roles.	3.22	3.63	3.64	+0.3%	+13%
Consistency	Provides a consistent method of evaluation across all units with well-defined and measurable expectations.	3.12	3.48	3.57	+2.6%	+14.4%
Equity and Accountability	Ensures an equitable set of expectations and measurements for all individuals involved.	2.78	3.63	3.55	-2.2%	+27.7%
Recognition	Develops and establishes a process and mechanism for objective recognition and identification.	3.02	3.29	3.63	+10.3%	+20.2%
Talent Management and Professional Development	Aligns and prepares individuals and the College in developing new skills and prepares the College for Succession Planning.	2.74	3.58	3.48	-2.8%	+27%

*Figure 5.5: Progress towards Performance Management Goals. To date, administrators have seen significant improvement in all goal areas, with an average change of +20.1% during the first three months of implementation.*



**In addition, the Working Group found that the College has many mechanisms in place for personal development and educational growth for administrative staff.** These include training offerings, advertised bi-monthly by a Human Resources email blast (Figure 5.6), as well as the Leadership Academy, an application-based series of workshops, led by the President herself, which culminates in a capstone project.

Category	Event Name	Description	Location	Date	Start Time
Academic Affairs	Lunchtime Assessment Series - Deb Dalrymple	The purpose of these open forums is to discuss assessment strategies and share ideas with the colleagues.	CH 301	12/3/2013	12:45 PM
Academic Affairs	Lunchtime Assessment Series - Deb Dalrymple	The purpose of these open forums is to discuss assessment strategies and share ideas with the colleagues.	CH 301	12/17/2013	12:45 PM
Academic Affairs	Building a Teaching Portfolio - Joan Brookshire	These workshops will prepare faculty to develop a professional e-portfolio for use in course assessment and/or promotion process.	CH 301 & SH 234	12/18/2013	2:00 PM
HR	Title IX & Preventing Sexual Harassment Training	A review of the elements of sexual harassment, prohibited conduct including retaliation, administrative processes, and disciplinary consequences for violating the College's two policies against sexual discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual violence.	SC 303 & NH 218	12/18/2013	4:00 PM
IT	Blackboard Analytics for Learn	The purpose of this session is for a pilot group of faculty to discuss uses of Blackboard Analytics for Learn, locate data using the Analytic tool for Learn and analyze data in relation to student success.	Central Campus in Blue Bell	12/5/2013	9:00 AM
IT	Blackboard Grade Center and WebAdvisor	The purpose of this session is to coach faculty in using the Grade Center in Blackboard to inform grades entered into WebAdvisor.	ATC 320	12/9/2013	9:00 AM
IT	Astra Training	Astra Training	SH 234	12/9/2013	10:00 AM
IT	Blackboard Grade Center and WebAdvisor	The purpose of this session is to coach faculty in using the Grade Center in Blackboard to inform grades entered into WebAdvisor.	SH 251	12/9/2013	12:30 PM
IT	Intro to Excel West Campus	Intro to Excel West Campus	SH 234	12/9/2013	1:00 PM

*Figure 5.6: Weekly Professional Development Calendar. Above is a sample email from 2013 listing professional development opportunities for faculty, administrators, and support staff across campuses. These weekly emails continue in AY14-15.*

## Opportunities

**The College has a clearly defined organizational structure in place across all units; however, the Working Group did raise concerns about administrative continuity.** There have been instances in which either administrative turnover or retirement has left gaps—either lapses in communication or a lack of understanding about how a new process replicates the work of, for example, a re-assigned staff member or of a retiring faculty member with some administrative responsibilities. In the current budget environment, if an administrative staff member leaves or retires, his or her position may go unfilled. The job responsibilities of that staff member may be divided among several other staff members or streamlined by new technologies. **In addition, the Working Group found that some members of the College community worry about the continuity of the large number of initiatives at the College; a shared plan to coordinate these initiatives across the College may help ease anxieties about an initiative's completion if a key member of the team leaves or is re-assigned.** In short, turnover or retirement may result in loss of key institutional knowledge.

This loss, in turn, leads to missing links in the communication pathway for faculty and staff in those areas. During and after these sorts of transitions, there may remain ongoing confusion about who is currently managing the areas for which that staff member was responsible, even when some members of the College know how that person's work is being re-allocated. Regular updates about changing responsibilities are helpful to all members of the College community, not just to administrative staff, and are anticipated to become increasingly important as employees take advantage of the 2014 Voluntary Retirement Incentive plan. **The Working Group observed that the College could develop stronger planning and communication mechanisms to ensure continuity when staff positions or related administrative processes undergo a transition.** Documenting the history of an initiative, systematizing the way transitions are handled, and communicating the re-assignment of responsibilities during and after a transition would be helpful in maintaining administrative efficacy during times of change. **In sum, the Working Group suggested that the College strengthen processes that support administrative continuity and institutional knowledge management, including those that document current practices and systematize the way transitions are handled.**

### Suggestion for Improvement

- 5. The College should strengthen processes that support administrative continuity and institutional knowledge management, including those that document current practices and systematize the way transitions are handled.**

(Theme 3: Continuous Institutional Renewal)



# Standard 6: Integrity

## Standard 6: Integrity



### Fostering a Climate of Respect

Building a climate of respect on campus starts with the College's Non-Discrimination Policy. The Office of Equity and Diversity Initiatives monitors and periodically assesses the extent to which our practices are in compliance with Board of Trustees, County, State, and Federal guidelines. Human Resources, for example, conducts orientation sessions for new employees that include diversity programming, and conducts exit interviews to ascertain the reasons why an employee is leaving his/her position.

Any claim of discriminatory activity, whether by employee or student, is brought to the attention of the Director of Equity and Diversity Initiatives, and is reviewed, investigated and resolved by that office. The same office is also responsible for assisting the Executive Director of Human Resources in evaluating requests for reasonable accommodations, and, as the College's Section 504/ADA Coordinator, the Director of Equity and Diversity Initiatives is the person designated to hear appeals of denials of reasonable accommodation requests. Similarly, any violation of Title IX is brought to the attention of the Director of Equity and Diversity Initiatives, who is also the College's certified Title IX Coordinator. Information on Title IX policies, procedures and ongoing training initiatives is available on the College's website on a dedicated web page, "Sexual Misconduct."

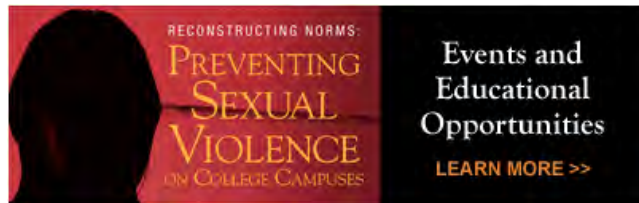


Figure 6.1: Promoting Title IX Education. The College holds many regularly scheduled programs to educate students, faculty, and staff on Title IX issues.

As well, the College holds many regularly scheduled programs for students to learn about healthy relationships, to understand the full scope of sexual misconduct, to identify the signs of sexual misconduct, and learn how to help a friend who is experiencing sexual misconduct (Figure 6.1). These workshops, presented by Victim Services Center of Montgomery County and the **Student Support and Referral Team (SSRT)**, focus on the facts about sexual assault, Pennsylvania state laws, the effects of drug and alcohol on sexual violence, steps to take after an assault, and handling disclosures. (SSRT is a free, confidential referral service available to all students. It involves a support team of counselors, faculty and staff who assist students dealing with issues such as emotional distress, stress, anxiety, eating disorders, abuse, depression, grief, potential violence and substance abuse. SSRT works to connect students with College and community resources and caring professionals.) The workshops are supplemented by related Lunch and Learn sessions. Two sessions held this academic year focused on the role of bystander intervention and engagement in the prevention of sexual assaults and safety on campus. Past offerings have focused on domestic violence prevention and on dating violence, including cyber stalking.



## Background and Overview

*N.B. Compliance items are indicated in bold and matched with the corresponding Fundamental Element (FE); see the Accreditation Readiness Roadmap for specific documents evidencing that compliance.*

During its Self-Study discussions, Working Group 1 confirmed that **the College seeks to promote a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration for a range of backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives (6FE 4 and 7). Integrity is a foundational value at Montgomery County Community College and serves as guiding principle in all of the College's operations, thereby reflecting a commitment to academic quality, a learner-centered environment, diversity and honesty (6FE 4).** The pillars of the College's commitment to integrity include student rights and responsibilities, impartial and effective student appeal processes, effective and fair academic policies with quality standards, thorough and broad based review of curriculum, integrity in assessment, a firm commitment to diversity, appropriate and truthful public information, clear and equitable policies regarding hiring and promotion of faculty and staff, appropriate grievance procedures, academic freedom, appropriate dealings of students in terms of financial aid, **intellectual property rights (6FE 6),** and academic rigor.

**The College advances its vision, mission, values, and institutional goals with integrity. To ensure its integrity, Montgomery County Community College maintains effective communication with both internal stakeholders (students, staff, faculty, and administrators) and external stakeholders (government and regulatory agencies, accrediting bodies, and the public) through the dissemination of accurate and accessible information (6FE 5 and 11).** Adherence to standing policies and procedures regarding standards of fair treatment for students, faculty, staff, and administrators establish consistent expectations that aim to foster the overall success of the College and those it serves. References to these standards are also included in the syllabus template distributed to all instructors by the College. (Figure 6.2 displays key words in published policy documents.)

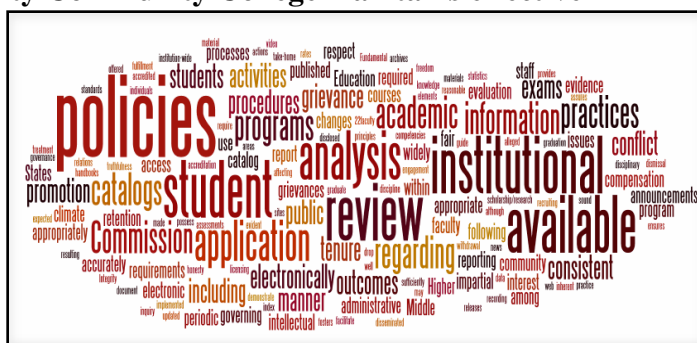


Figure 6.2: Policy Word Cloud. A word cloud made from the College's policy documents highlights the College's emphasis on students, analysis, availability, and review.

**To assure equity in hiring and promotion, the Office of Human Resources follows federal, state, and College regulations and determines the form of all hiring and promotion procedures at the College (6FE 2).** The Human Resources Office in concert with the Office for Institutional Research collects data to determine the equity of the operations and in response to strategic plan targets to maintain fidelity to equity. The Dean of Student Affairs is responsible for student disciplinary actions and for assuring that students receive due process. Policies and procedures on grade appeals and student grievance procedures are available on the website, the portal, and in the student handbook. The Human Resources Office handles all grievances filed under any of the labor contracts and ensures that the process is equitable and that its effectiveness is assessed. Adherence to standing policies and procedures regarding standards of



fair treatment for students, faculty, staff, and administrators establish consistent expectations that aim to foster the overall success of the college and those it serves. **The College also has policies in place (Board Policies 2.8, 6.15, 6.16) to prevent conflicts of interest and nepotism (6FE 3).**

## Self-Study Methodology

During the Self-Study, Working Group 1 was charged with examining issues involving equity in employment, training, promotion, student and employee grievance and appeals processes, student discipline, academic integrity, and public information. The group reviewed policies, conducted interviews with administrators, faculty, support staff, and students. They further reviewed supporting documents that assure equity in hiring and promotion, outline responsibilities and advocacy for student disciplinary actions and student due process. They also reviewed how grievances under labor contracts are handled to assure equity.

## Findings and Discussion

### Strengths

**The Working Group affirmed that there is a great deal of respect within and outside the College for President Karen Stout, who invites the sharing of “the good, the bad, and the ugly” (6FE 4).** Such open discussions encourage a quick and united response to open issues. Dr. Stout conducts several Open Forum sessions each semester for faculty, administrators, and staff, where she encourages open and honest dialogue. Similarly, she meets with students on both campuses for “Wraps with the President,” during which students give her their feedback and experiences regarding what is working or not working on the respective campuses.

The Working Group found that **the College has fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation and dismissal of employees (6FE 2)** as expected by Middle States. The College follows detailed hiring, evaluation and dismissal policies and procedures coordinated by the Human Resources Office within Federal regulations to ensure that all individuals are given fair and equal opportunity to obtain employment, continued employment, and promotion. The hiring process is documented on the HR SharePoint portal, and the Office of Human Resources manages all reappointment and dismissal processes. Except at the administrative level, all procedures are determined by collective bargaining agreements as codified by each of the two bargaining units. The manner of evaluation, the weight of evidence, evaluation responsibilities, and rights of appeal are all precisely determined. The faculty and support staff appeal process is detailed in both the faculty and support staff contracts.

The research of the Working Group also demonstrated that the **College pursues honesty and truthfulness in public relations, recruiting and admissions (6FE 8), and shares information on assessment and on program graduation, retention, certification pass rates, and other outcomes, as appropriate to the programs offered, with the public (6FE 15). Factual information about the College and the catalog are readily available through the College’s website (6FE 16).** Some examples of these documents include the Institutional Profile and Public Safety Reports. **Assessment information about the College is available on the website, the portal, and the Research and Practice blog (6FE 15). College catalogs are available**

**online and through the WebAdvisor function, and portions are available in Spanish (6FE 11 and 12).** The library also archives print copies of past print catalogues (6FE 10).

As part of its outreach activities, the office of Equity and Diversity Initiatives is directly involved with several ongoing college-wide activities and events. Some of these include the faculty diversity initiatives grant support program, the annual faculty diversity fellowship, the diversity reps program, the annual Presidential Symposium on Diversity, and the Safe Spaces program. The purpose behind all of this programming is to increase diversity of the College population, to heighten awareness of diverse learning styles and diverse cultures within the College community, and to promote greater inclusiveness in all aspects of the College's educational mission.

The College's policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), ancestry, national origin, age (40 or older), sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran's status, marital status, or disability in its admissions practices, educational programs, or activities. **College-wide training sessions are conducted monthly on the relevant workplace policies addressing discrimination under Title II (ADA), Title VII, and Title IX.** Concerns or inquiries regarding compliance in these areas are brought to the attention of the Director of Equity and Diversity Initiatives for review and resolution. Furthermore, the Working Group found that **the College assures that student violations of institutional policies and grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably (6FE 1).** Students are made aware of the process through New Student Orientations and online via the Student Handbook, as well as at Welcome Week Events. The majority of cases are resolved through mediation, conciliation, and engagement in behavioral modification agreements. Cases requiring a greater degree of formality and objectivity are resolved through the Judicial Hearing Process managed by the Dean of Student Affairs.

**As well, policies at the College are reviewed and assessed at set intervals, according to a calendar maintained by the President's Office (6FE 18).** Recently, for example, the Grade Appeal policy was slightly revised, with input taken not only from faculty at an open faculty meeting on the topic, but from students, administrators, and advisors. Proposed changes to policies routinely progress through all four **Governance Committees**, the **SGA**, and affected administrative offices for comment. Of course, policies that are affected by changes in Federal or State laws are revised immediately; currently, for example, Federal changes have resulted in review of College policies related to Title IX. Other institutional practices, for example, the implementation of new advising processes, are also reviewed and assessed periodically with input from the College community. The Working Group affirmed that **Montgomery County Community College maintains strong policies regarding academic and intellectual freedom as defined in its agreement with collective bargaining agreement with the faculty union, Article 10 and lived out in the shared governance process (6FE 3 and 5).** A faculty member is entitled to freedom in research and publication. A faculty member "is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing his or her subject, but should be careful not to introduce into his or her teachings controversial matter which has no relation to the subject" (Faculty Contract, Article 10). The academic and intellectual freedoms that are accorded to employees and students are a cornerstone of the College's culture that is centered on respect for individuals and individual perspectives. To highlight the importance of the individual opinions and experiences, College employees are encouraged to take part in committees, councils, and other groups that showcase the College's commitment to leadership at every level of the College infrastructure.

The Working Group also confirmed that **the College's Academic Policies and regulations are widely disseminated and are also available on the website (6FE 13)**. All members of the College must follow the Academic Integrity Policy and “maintain a constant commitment to academic integrity.” In keeping with the College's long standing commitment to shared governance, most processes related to academic matters, curricula, accreditation information, and assessment initiatives originate from or are reviewed by the Governance Committees. Respective members of the Governance Committees bring issues and or topics before the administrators, faculty, and staff after endorsement. Agenda are circulated in advance of meetings. The Governance Committees are composed of a cross section of administrators, faculty, staff, and students to handle matters pertaining to programs, operational issues, and academic policies. These Committees distribute their findings to the appropriate units of the College community. Regular reports are provided at meetings and annual reports from each of Governance Committees are required and posted to the portal.

The Working Group found **that faculty evaluations, including faculty tenure and promotional processes, are accurately followed per the faculty contract as described in Chapter 10 and that performance evaluations for administrators and staff are regular and consistent**. The College's evaluation systems provide employees with a means of identifying performance strengths and opportunities for improvement. Conduct issues may also be identified through such processes.

The Working Group affirmed that the academic course and program offering process is well developed and operates in a regular fashion, scheduled with faculty coordinator input to ensure that students are able to complete programs in a timely manner. **Required and elective courses are sufficiently available to allow students to graduate within the published program length (6FE 6 and 9)**. The **Academic Program Review (APR)** process is designed to examine, assess, and strengthen academic program assessment, which includes program length and course availability, in order to stimulate planning and improvement while enhancing quality. The APR assists in determining a program's ability to respond to future challenges and opportunities, to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses, and thus and thus to determine priorities, shaping an action plan for a program's development. For more information on this curricular pathway development process, see related discussion in the chapter on Standard 5, Administration, and the chapter on Standard 11, Educational Offerings.

**Finally, the Working Group affirmed the College's compliance with all reporting and assessment requirements of the Commission. The College hosts all required Federal, State, County and MSCHE information on its website and files required reports in a timely manner (6FE 14 and 17).**

### Suggestions for Improvement

None



# Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

## Standard 7: Institutional Assessment



### Benchmarking the Two-Year Experience with VFA Metrics

As one of the 40 original pilot colleges to test the institutional metrics and data definitions put forward by the American Association of Community Colleges' Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), MCCC collects institutional assessment data that portray a compelling and aggregate description of student progress. Sometimes called "the first national accountability system created by community colleges for community colleges," VFA metrics better represent the diversity of two-year students' educational experiences. (Non-VFA metrics may exclude part-time students or non-credit career and technical students who are a key part of community colleges' mission.) These data help rebut invalid comparisons of community colleges with selective and four-year colleges and universities, while positioning MCCC to participate in the national conversation about college performance and student preparation for the workforce.

For example, using the VFA metrics allows the College to benchmark itself against similar institutions over both two- and six-year timeframes; the cohorts include transfer students traditionally excluded from other measures of higher education performance. Using this data,

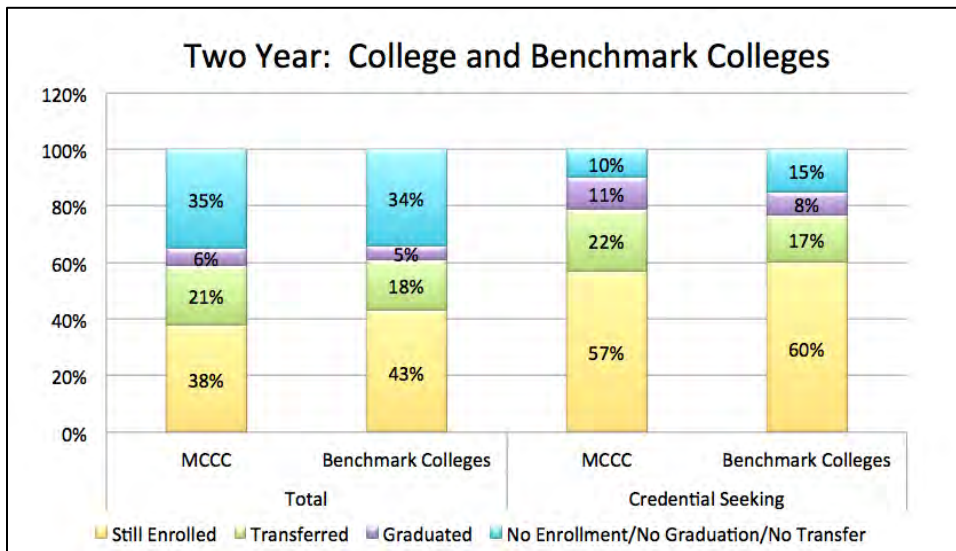


Figure 7.1: VFA Two-Year Benchmarking Data. Participating in the Voluntary Framework of Accountability gives the College access to additional benchmarking data using metrics that align better with the unique missions of community colleges.

MCCC found that more students remain enrolled after two years at the benchmark colleges, while MCCC transfers approximately 3% more students to partner institutions. Our performance in retaining and graduating credential-seeking students (identified as those completing 12 or more credits) during this timeframe exceeds those of the benchmark colleges (Figure 7.1). VFA metrics follow

community college students over longer timeframes to provide more accurate cohort data. MCCC data shows that 63% of students are likely to graduate or transfer when viewed over a six-year timeframe, which reveals a much better success rate, and one more compatible with the pace of student progression at typical community colleges than with the rate calculated over the Federal three-year reporting period (often termed the "White House scorecard") (Figure 7.2).



The College has integrated VFA metrics into its Institutional Effectiveness Model (discussed on page 7-3). These metrics have helped the College develop a more comprehensive idea about student progression and have helped MCCC identify points where interventions may lead to improved student outcomes. For

example, VFA metrics helped the College understand why many students transfer prior to attaining a degree. As a result, the College overhauled the number of credits in its degree programs, striving to keep the number to around 60, in order to simplify the path to completion. The College also now encourages students to complete by adding degree completion incentives in all new transfer agreements.

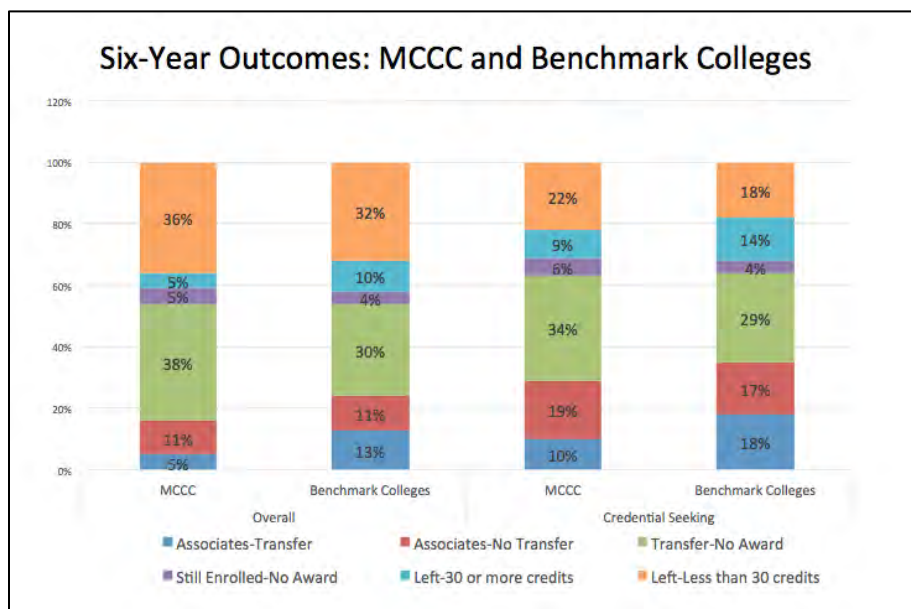


Figure 7.2: Six-Year Outcomes. The VFA metrics use six-year, not three-year, metrics, as well as additional categories that represent the diverse goals of community college students.

As President Stout noted, “I’ve worked on the VFA since 2008, first as a member of the student outcomes working group and now as a member of the VFA Planning Advisory Committee and as co-chair of the 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges . . . If most of our 1,132 community colleges adopt the framework, the VFA holds the promise of providing a fundamentally improved assessment of community college performance and, a better way to tell our story.” The VFA offers right now a consistent methodology for all community colleges to demonstrate their value. Full-scale adoption will give community colleges a new and powerful common voice to speak to student success (*Community College Journal*, 2003, pp. 12-14).

## Background and Overview

*N.B. Compliance items are indicated in bold and matched with the corresponding Fundamental Element (FE); see the Accreditation Readiness Roadmap for specific documents evidencing that compliance.*

The College’s commitment to institutional assessment reflects its recognition of the critical role systematic and ongoing assessment plays in continuous institutional renewal. Quality assessment provides the necessary evidence to guide effective decision-making in, for example, budgeting, curricular development, and the alignment of services to meet the needs of the community, accrediting bodies and, most importantly, students. **Institutional assessment is embedded in the College’s most current mission statement:** “The College participates in ongoing self-assessment and review in order to enhance and improve instructional programs and services to the students and the county we serve.” **The importance of assessment is also**

**present in each of the College's strategic goals (7FE 1.1 and 3).** For an example of just one, the College's second strategic goal reads: "Build curricular relevance, innovation in delivery and supportive faculty development systems." It is followed by assessment benchmarks, known as a Critical Success Factors, one of which reads: "Develop strong faculty assessment systems to ensure program relevance and to support decision-making." Assessment, therefore, is part of the strategic goal itself.

A fully mature **Institutional Effectiveness Model (IEM)**, with an accompanying dashboard, is used to inform planning and budgeting. The concept for the IEM began to take shape in AY03-04 and its first iteration aligned seven resource elements (i.e., Financial, Human Resource, Enrollment, etc.) and evaluated how the College was performing in these areas. The second version of the IEM was crafted in 2005 by expanding the IEM by mapping indices to the mission and resource indicators of the College. One of the major overhauls to the model was added metrics from the **National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP)** to benchmark at the state and national level. The IEM was again reshaped in 2012, when the model was crafted around the College's six strategic indicators embedded in the current strategic plan.

**The IEM collates data from multiple sources and charts that data against the strategic plan and selected external benchmarks (7FE 1.2 and 1.5).** Examples of data sources that inform the IEM include: enrollment and credit-hour figures, retention information, gateway course success, the results of nationally normed surveys (Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, and the Survey of Entering Student Engagement), workforce development and grants costs and revenue, personnel investments, college demographic, transfer data, and even Core SLO results. The Community Perception Survey gauges our community's perception of the College. **The President's Leadership Cabinet reviews the IEM quarterly (7FE 2).** See Figure 7.3 for a screenshot of part of an IEM dashboard for Strategic Goal 1. Appendix 7.1 contains a complete IEM Report and Data Set, followed by the latest College Fact Book Highlights.

One of the goals of the IEM is to supplement data about institutional trends, as well as data about the College's performance relative to its peer groups, with aspirational targets. While the IEM guides the assessment of the College's effectiveness in its missions and goals, it also helps frame the Academic Program Review process, as well as all Student Success Initiatives. The larger purpose of the Institutional Effectiveness Model is to provide information about various metrics instrumental in evaluating the "health" of the College both academically and in the non-curricular areas. Furthermore, the IEM provides decision-makers the data they need for policy formation and planning decisions.

Improve Progression & Completion	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	1 Year Change	5 Year Ch
Persistence									
Fall to Spring	69.03%	68.98%	69.80%	70.92%	69.87%	65.10%	67.60%	3.58%	-2.00%
Fall to Fall	48.25%	48.88%	50.80%	50.37%	49.90%	50.10%	49.60%	-1.00%	1.47%
Goal Attainment									
Completers	99.0%	97.0%	98.0%	99.0%	99.0%	100.0%	99.0%	-1.01%	2.06%
Credit Level Course Retention and Success									
Retention	88.32%	88.56%	89.51%	89.51%	85.65%	88.90%	90.00%	1.28%	1.63%
Success	79.98%	79.38%	78.58%	77.86%	77.86%	78.10%	78.60%	0.64%	-0.98%
Credit Developmental Course & College Level Retention and Success									
Dev First CL Math Retention	72.04%	75.37%	81.91%	78.73%	80.1%	82.21%	Spring 2014	2.63%	14.12%
Dev First CL Writing Retention	93.52%	93.16%	94.11%	92.67%	93.5%	91.14%	Spring 2014	-2.52%	-2.54%
Dev First CL Math Success	63.93%	74.32%	70.45%	68.01%	68.9%	68.71%	Spring 2014	-0.28%	7.48%
Dev First CL Writing Success	80.12%	81.00%	77.19%	78.47%	79.2%	73.13%	Spring 2014	-7.66%	-8.72%
Retention and Success in Core Courses									
Comp I Retention	89.90%	90.90%	91.64%	91.73%	91.57%	90.10%	92.00%	2.11%	1.21%
Comp II Retention	85.40%	86.70%	86.90%	87.53%	88.38%	86.20%	88.40%	2.55%	1.96%
College Algebra Retention	76.00%	74.50%	81.88%	78.97%	80.40%	76.90%	79.10%	2.86%	6.17%
Speech Retention	90.50%	90.50%	90.31%	89.63%	94.14%	91.90%	92.00%	0.11%	1.66%
Comp I Success	74.62%	76.90%	76.94%	75.54%	75.62%	71.60%	73.40%	2.51%	-4.55%
Comp II Success	80.26%	77.10%	79.25%	78.80%	77.09%	76.90%	74.50%	-3.12%	-3.37%
College Algebra Success	61.65%	62.91%	61.80%	66.23%	66.36%	62.00%	58.60%	-5.48%	-6.85%
Speech Success	83.29%	83.07%	86.28%	84.25%	83.91%	80.80%	80.90%	0.12%	-2.61%
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	1 Year Change	5 Year Ch
Completed a Degree or Transferred (IPEDS GRS & Transfer Rates): Cohort 2009									
Completed FT	12.87%	13.26%	12.70%	14.10%	13.95%	12.70%	14.00%	10.24%	5.58%
Completed PT	1.37%	1.99%	3.30%	2.20%	3.03%	4.10%	4.70%	14.63%	136.18%
Transferred FT	30.37%	32.27%	26.40%	26.80%	25.76%	29.10%	25.00%	-14.09%	-22.53%
Transferred PT	29.93%	28.57%	23.40%	26.60%	30.69%	36.60%	35.40%	-3.28%	23.91%

Figure 7.3: Institutional Effectiveness Model Dashboard. Here the IEM dashboard shows aggregated assessment data in support of Strategic Goal 1, "Increase student access and success."

As well, the College uses multiple other quantitative and qualitative items in support of institutional and student learning assessment. These include:

- **An Assessment Plan, updated annually, that articulates shared responsibility for assessment at all levels of the College (7FE 1.3 and 3).** The Assessment Plan discusses progress towards assessment goals and shows how the various elements of the College's assessment practices are related to each other and the mission. **The Assessment Plan also documents the College's institutional assessment timetable (7FE 1.4 and 1.6).**
- **Ongoing reporting about nationally recognized Student Success Initiatives and the distribution of assessment results.** Examples include monthly assessment reports on selected topics by the Office of Institutional Research (posted on Think Success, IR's SSI blog) and the Annual Report on Core Assessment produced by the Assessment Committee (7FE 2 and Figure 7.4).

With student success at the heart of its strategic plan, MCCC developed practices and procedures designed to realize this goal, and the individual goals of each student. Such laser-sharp focus on student success has led to college-wide, data-informed decision-making resulting in:

- Reducing new students' placement in developmental English by 31 percentage points without impacting their subsequent success in college-level English
- Increased success rates among the highest-need developmental education students by as much as 20 percentage points by scaling a redesigned course—Concepts of Numbers—that is being replicated at 10 other colleges
- Improved the college readiness of students in feeder high schools by 63% through a variety of policy and procedure changes, student support services, and course redesigns
- Improved minority men's persistence by an average of 15% through mentoring.

Figure 7.4: Data-Informed Decision-Making. Institutional Assessment uses data in support of strategic goals for student access and success.



- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** from non-academic areas of the College, such as IT and Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, are assessed quarterly. A sample slide from a quarterly review of Goal 6, “Create a High Performing Culture,” is shown as Figure 7.5. Details from IT metrics that align with Goal 6 are measured and reported.
- An **Academic Program Review (APR)** process **that links the assessment of student learning outcomes to institutional assessment (7FE 1.1)**. Program coordinators report assessment information annually, and, based on these reports, complete a comprehensive review every five years, known as the Academic Program Review (APR). This revision links the program review process to assessment at the institutional and curricular levels and, thereby support the comprehensive assessment plan for the College. **The findings of each Academic Program Review (APR) are shared across the College’s governance structure (7FE 2)**. Processes, policies and procedures for assessing student learning are firmly in place and **assessment at the program and course levels are now part of the annual work of the faculty and deans; results are shared with the College through the Office of Academic Affairs and used to improve the curriculum (7FE 1.3)**.

Continue to build out our data and analytical capacity	
Goal Metrics	Progress towards Metrics
Project Completion on Time – 100% Full Integration into Business Processes – 100% Improve use of reports – 10% Expand Faculty Blackboard Utilization – 5%	Project Completion on Time – In Progress Full Integration into Business Processes – In Progress Improve use of reports – In Progress Expand Faculty Blackboard Utilization – In Progress
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal Activity</b></p> <p>➤ SQL project on schedule. Working through testing of Student System and rewriting student system xmenus as either reports or subroutines.</p> <p>➤ Implementation and training completed for Synoptix, which will is designed to provide improved reporting of Financial data. Finance staff have been working on creating reports.</p> <p>➤ The College awarded a contract to provide redundant fiber pathways and we are in the implementation phase of the project. In addition, we will be working throughout the year on creating a disaster recovery site on our Pottstown campus.</p> <p>➤ Finance is working with Academic Affairs, Human Resources, Information Technology, and the Registrar to improve reporting capabilities associated with faculty course load.</p> <p>➤ Scheduled faculty training for Blackboard Analytics for Learn</p>	

Figure 7.5: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). KPIs from non-academic units are integrated into institutional assessment and are reported quarterly.

## Self-Study Methodology

During the Self-Study, Working Group 4 investigated how the College measured its progress towards its institutional goals and looked for gaps in the measurement process. It also evaluated how assessment data (and its analysis and implications for the future) are used to improve institutional effectiveness at all levels, if the assessment data is relevant to the College’s mission, and, if not, what changes need to be made to improve its relevance. Finally, Working Group 4 analyzed how assessment results are communicated to the entire College.

## Findings and Discussion

### Strengths

**Working Group 4 found that extensive and widespread assessment occurs at all levels of the College and that the results of assessment are used to inform change and planning throughout the College.** Indeed, assessment activities have increased significantly since the 2010 PRR. The Institutional Effectiveness Model helps facilitate the discussion on how well the College is doing in meeting its goals and overall mission. Student success indicators, as well as other metrics, have helped the College determine where to focus its resources and planning efforts.

The Working Group also found that not only do a number of studies, reports, and analyses focus on institutional effectiveness, **there is also a commitment to and a value placed on evaluating the effectiveness of the College and its units. Effectiveness, defined as the successful implementation of the College's mission, is part of the culture and fabric of the College.** To support this finding, Working Group 4 assembled the following chart (Figure 7.6) to synthesize answers to its research charges. The chart is organized by strategic goal and lists the sources of institutional assessment data, the improvements made based on that data, and how that data is communicated to the College community.

Linked to Mission and Goals	Sources of Institutional Assessment Data	Improvements Made as a Result of Data Analysis (Examples)	How this Data Is Communicated to College
Strategic Goal 1: Access and Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CCSSE</li> <li>Enrollment Services Unit Plan and KPI Report</li> <li>Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>IEM</li> <li>SENSE Survey</li> <li>Transfer Survey</li> <li>College Fact Book</li> <li>Semester Enrollment Reports</li> <li>Articulation Agreements – Dual Admission and Program-to-Program</li> <li>SSI Work/Research Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moved 1000 students out of developmental English to college-level English.</li> <li>Increased persistence rates of new students to the College.</li> <li>Increased high-school yield rate in county.</li> <li>Increased student retention in developmental courses.</li> <li>Increased proportion of students of color.</li> <li>Increased number of students transferring to regional institutions.</li> <li>Launched Gateway to College.</li> <li>Increased private funding for students with financial need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director-level and President's Leadership Cabinet meetings</li> <li>Student Success data presented in <i>Research in the Practice</i> blog/newsletter</li> <li>President's Monthly Report to the Board and weekly email updates</li> <li>Dr. Swanson's enrollment email updated</li> <li>Big News Blog</li> </ul>
Strategic Goal 2: Build Curricular Relevance, Innovation in Delivery &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Program Reviews</li> <li>Program Annual Reports</li> <li>Faculty Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created the Virtual Campus</li> <li>Created new programs</li> <li>Developed a new</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informal meetings of Deans with their faculty to discuss assessment</li> <li>Emails from Academic Affairs</li> </ul>



Linked to Mission and Goals	Sources of Institutional Assessment Data	Improvements Made as a Result of Data Analysis (Examples)	How this Data Is Communicated to College
Supportive Faculty Development Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Task Force</li> <li>“Great Colleges to Work For” Survey</li> <li>Academic Affairs Strategic Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>faculty evaluation plan</li> <li>Developed stackable formats</li> <li>Faculty professional development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SharePoint Portal</li> </ul>
Strategic Goal 3: Develop an Engaged Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Perception Survey</li> <li>CCSSE</li> <li>Campus Compact Survey</li> <li>IEM</li> <li>Economic Impact Executive Summary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slight increase in overall presence in the County as members of the community attend various College-sponsored events.</li> <li>Increase in scores in Support for Learners from CCSSE.</li> <li>Increased recognition of the College’s force in the County’s economic fabric.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>President’s Leadership Cabinet meetings</li> <li>Research in Practice blog/newsletter</li> <li>Big News</li> <li>2013-2014: Institutional Effectiveness Q1-Report</li> </ul>
Strategic Goal 4: Sense of Place to Support Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilities Master Plan</li> <li>Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>Public Safety Training and Certification Planning Resources</li> <li>IEM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased access by students to the College’s IT infrastructure.</li> <li>Updated and secure physical plant and facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Directors’ and Cabinet meetings</li> <li>Research in Practice blog/newsletter</li> <li>President’s Monthly Report to the Board and weekly email updates</li> <li>Annual Public Safety Report</li> <li>Big News Blog</li> </ul>
Strategic Goal 5: Entrepreneurial Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IEM</li> <li>Performance Management Program Goals</li> <li>2013-2014: Institutional Effectiveness Q1-Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch of the Culinary Arts Institute and the Virtual Campus as self-sustaining units.</li> <li>Creation of the University Center for use by four-year partnership.</li> <li>Integrated Drexel partnership for on-site four-year degree completion.</li> <li>Launch of new Capital Campaign.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly meetings with Administrative Staff</li> </ul>
Strategic Goal 6: Create a High Performance Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2013-2014: Institutional Effectiveness Q1-Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implemented the Performance Management Program for administrators to align with goals of division and College.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email on PMP from Human Resources</li> <li>Work throughout the divisions on PMP and cascading down of goals for Administrators</li> </ul>

Linked to Mission and Goals	Sources of Institutional Assessment Data	Improvements Made as a Result of Data Analysis (Examples)	How this Data Is Communicated to College
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continual build out of analytics for various areas of the College to assist with overall department, division, and unit planning.</li> </ul>	

*Figure 7.6: Sources, Improvements, and Communication of Institutional Data by Strategic Goal. This chart, compiled by Working Group 4, lists the sources of institutional assessment data, the improvements made based on that data, and how that data is communicated to the College community.*

## Opportunities

**Working Group 4 found a need for additional communication concerning how institutional assessment relates to what individuals do on a daily basis.** Although the implementation of the new Performance Management Program for the administrative staff addresses part of this concern, unaddressed are how faculty members and support staff understand their connection to institutional assessment. Communication about how the IEM relates to everyone's performance will be important for the College going forward. **Working Group 4 also concluded that sharing accessible, succinct, and easily interpretable data with all levels helps make institutional assessment relevant.** Widespread sharing of data will help everyone better utilize existing data to improve planning throughout the College.

Given the limited personnel in the Office of Institutional Research, the College needs to be highly strategic about assessment activities. The Office of Academic Affairs should make the navigation of the portal to retrieve assessment data easier. It should also continue to help members of the College community understand and interpret the IEM. **Overall, the College should enhance its communication processes in order to make assessment data easier to locate and retrieve, easier to interpret, and more widely available, as appropriate.**

## Suggestion for Improvement

- The College should enhance its communication processes in order to make assessment data easier to locate and retrieve, easier to interpret, and more widely available, as appropriate.**

(Theme 2: Communication and Collaboration)



# Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

## Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention



### Removing Barriers to Student Persistence

In February 2014, the College earned Achieving the Dream's sixth annual Leah Meyer Austin award, which recognizes outstanding achievement in supporting student success through the creation of a culture of evidence, continuous improvement, systemic institutional change, broad engagement of stakeholders, and equity, with particular attention to low-income students, first-generation college students, and students of color (Figure 8.1). Austin, whose visionary leadership shaped the development of Achieving the Dream, is the former Senior Vice President for Program Development and Organizational Learning at the Lumina Foundation.

In addition to building college-wide solutions and engaging in data-informed decision making, the College was commended for its work to improve developmental education outcomes, college readiness, and student persistence. In one highlight, targeted efforts in developmental English have dramatically reduced student developmental English placement by 31%. Similar initiatives in developmental mathematics include a redesigned Fundamentals of Arithmetic course, which shows success rates exceeding traditional approaches by 20% without impacting subsequent course success rates. Placement ranges have been adjusted based on national research, and together with Academic Readiness Policy changes have reduced developmental math placement by 10% within four years, while preserving success rates.

The College complemented these targeted efforts with systemic, high-impact initiatives. The College's dual enrollment program has expanded significantly since fall 2006, focusing on the College's socio-economically challenged regions in the West Campus service area and subsequently improving its high school yield rate by 5% on average each year. Articulation agreements with the K-12 sector and four-year partners have fostered a seamless educational pipeline. The Academic Readiness Policy was reframed from a "testing first" to competency-based system, accelerating student completion. Academic Affairs has streamlined its program portfolio and redesigned its course schedule to provide students with

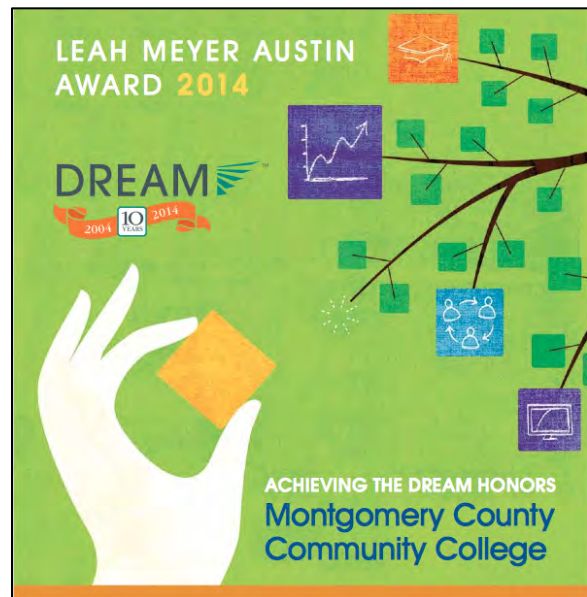
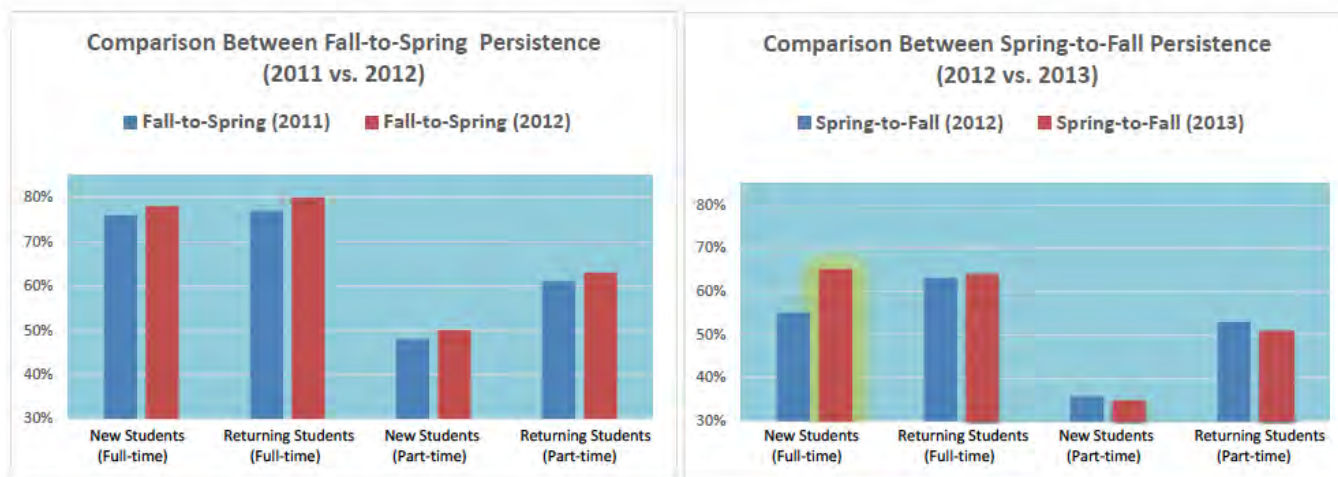


Figure 8.1: Leah Meyer Austin Winner 2014. Achieving the Dream honored the College with The Leah Meyer Austin Award for its culture of evidence supporting student success.

simplified pathways that maximize persistence and completion (Figure 8.2). Taken together, these practices have allowed the College to make continued process improvements that remove

*Summary:* Term-to-term persistence rates were calculated college-wide for fall-to-spring (2011 vs. 2012) and spring-to-fall (2012 vs. 2013). Four student cohorts representing new and returning students attending full-time or part-time were included.



*Evidence of Success:* Efforts in spring 2013 to reframe the College's academic course schedule from classroom utilization to a holistic pathway approach, in addition to adding a layer of standardization and quality control on class meeting times, are validated through an observed increase in term-to-term persistence rates (spring-to-fall 2013, right figure). Of note, returning spring 2013 full-time students to fall 2013 jumped to a record 65%, an unprecedented 10% change from the year prior. Part-time student returned at slightly higher rates as well.

unnecessary barriers and provide interventions to at-risk students.

*Figure 8.2: Evidence to Support Success. The College was awarded the 2014 Leah Meyer Austin award for creating a culture of evidence that supports student success; the chart above demonstrates increased student persistence resulting from a change in the scheduling of class meeting times.*

Other whole-College efforts enhanced student retention overall. In 2008, a comprehensive assessment across all highly enrolled courses identified fourteen initial gateway courses and the establishment of a Gateway Academy. The Academy provides a support and learning community for faculty teaching these courses, with a mission of developing, piloting, and bringing to scale strategies to improve student outcomes. One example includes the creation of a placement examination for biology. A common challenge across various Allied Health programs is low success in BIO 131, Human Anatomy & Physiology I. Success rates between Fall 2006-2010 were calculated at 55%-60% and were especially low among students who entered the course having only completed high school biology. Students who completed BIO 121, Principles of Biology I, prior to taking BIO 131, were much more likely to succeed. A customized biology placement test, framed around the salient outcomes of BIO 121, was developed, piloted, and assessed. Students scoring 55% or better on the placement test succeeded in BIO 131 at significantly higher rates of almost 70%.

Throughout all of its student success work, the College continues to apply a systematic, evidence-based approach to developing innovative strategies aimed at increasing its students' readiness and completion, while reducing the students' cost and time. **A complete overview of the evidence used to apply for the award is available as Appendix 8.1 (8FE 8).**



## Background and Overview

*N.B. Compliance items are indicated in bold and matched with the corresponding Fundamental Element (FE); see the Accreditation Readiness Roadmap for specific documents evidencing that compliance.*

With an **open admissions policy** that reflects its mission and commitment to lifelong learning, the College's admissions policies make accessible and affordable educational opportunities to all who apply, **including all high-school graduates, General Equivalency Degree and Commonwealth diploma recipients, transfer applicants from another College or University, as well as any person who is a non-high school graduate and approved for enrollment in the Early Admissions Program, and any non-high school graduate and non-General Equivalency recipient over the age of 18 who demonstrates, through assessment testing, an ability to benefit from postsecondary educational experiences (8FE 1).**

Admission policies also speak to unique student admission situations such as: readmission by students in good standing, academic renewal for previous students and readmission for students previously dismissed for disciplinary reasons. The admissions policy also speaks to selective admissions programs that are offered to students such as the honors programs, early admission, International student admission, and dual enrollment (Admissions Policy 4.7).

**Supporting information about degree programs, costs, transfer and support services are publically available on the website (8FE 2).** As well, information about

### STUDENT OUTCOMES

- **Retention (Persistence) Rate**  
This information provides the fall-to-spring persistence as well as the fall-to-fall persistence of first time students at the College during a defined year.
- **Graduation Rates** (Student Right-to-Know Act)  
The College will provide the rate of graduation of first-time and full-time students that start at the College at a defined fall semester and how many of those graduate within three years.
- **Transfer-Out Rates** (Student Right-to-Know Act)  
The College will provide the rate of graduation of first-time and full-time students that start at the College at a defined fall semester and how many of those do not graduate but transfer within three years.
- **Job Placement Rates for Graduates**  
The College will provide the rate of employment of graduates (full-time and part-time) and if those graduates are employed in a career related to their program.
- **IPEDS database / College Navigator**  
This federal Department of Education web site allows students to view information that colleges are required to report, and allows you to compare colleges on factors such as size, student body characteristics, academic programs, tuition and other costs, athletics, and other factors.
- **Core Curriculum**  
The College monitors how well our students meet our 13 General Education Core Goal competencies.
- **Student Learning Outcomes**  
The College posts the Student Learning Outcomes for each program on individualized pages which also include the program of study.
- **Research and Practice newsletters**  
The College actively seeks to promote student success by examining various aspects of the College's Student Success initiative and our work with Achieving the Dream.

persistence, graduation, transfer, and job placement rates are posted as part of the consumer information section of the site (Figure 8.3). In an effort to support student success and to safeguard academic standards, **the College requires that new first-time students demonstrate academic readiness upon admission, according to the posted policies (8FE 3 and 4). If academic readiness cannot be demonstrated, then students complete developmental courses or participate in preparatory activities intended to ready them for academic success.** It is required that students begin their pre-college (developmental) coursework **within completion of the first 15 college-level credits (8FE 3 and 4).**

*Figure 8.3: Student Outcomes and Consumer Information. Student outcomes and related consumer information are available via links on the College's website.*

**Program-specific student learning outcomes are available on the College's website as part of the College Catalog, as is information on the General Education learning outcomes that all of the College's students must meet (8FE 5).** The Office of Institutional Research produces monthly reports on the College's institutional assessment, all of which are available on a publicly available website, Think Success. The College also gives consideration to requests for program-specific assessment information.

The College retains students by providing a menu of student support services, including Tutorial Services, the Foundation Skills Lab, Library Services, the IT Help Desk, and the services offered through the Student Success Center (academic advising, personal counseling, career services, international student services, transfer, disability and Veterans' Services). It also offers a variety of additional services based on financial need including ACT 101 and KEYS program assistance. More information about these student support services may be found in the chapter on Standard 9: Student Support Services and in the **Student Success Inventory** included as Appendix 8.2.

## **Self-Study Methodology**

During the Self-Study, Working Group 5 explored how the College's admissions policies reflect its mission, as well as what programs and services help students meet their academic and career goals. In tandem with that research, Working Group 5 investigated the effectiveness of current intervention strategies to help students persist. Working Group 5 also looked specifically at how the College uses technology to enhance admissions and retention services. The Working Group researched how the College educates students on financial literacy, on paying for higher education, and on obtaining financial aid and student loans. Finally, Working Group 5 researched transfer of credit policies, support for transfer, and consistency in transfer policies.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Strengths**

**Robust financial aid resources, including information on FAFSA completion, tuition cost calculators, scholarship information, and sessions offered by the Student Success Center, help educate students about paying for classes (8FE 6).** Recently, the College was one of seven institutions and only two community colleges (out of more than 200 applicants) selected nationally for the EDUCAUSE Next Generation Learning Challenge Breakthrough Model Incubator (NGLC), which facilitated the enhancement of the College's online financial, civic, and digital literacy resources in support of increased student persistence. This grant funded **the development of a financial literacy online resource similar to a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), with a curriculum developed by the college and from open sources, begins with the topic "how to pay for college."** The online resource, which comprises tutorials developed as a result of survey data that indicated that paying for college was students' number one concern, appears on the College's YouTube site and on the Montco Money site in Blackboard; messages promoting the financial literacy series were displayed on College's building TV monitors, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. New students will be expected to complete each tuition-free module before or during their first semester. The

future New Literacy program does not replace the existing Strategies for College Success (SCS 101); rather, the modules are intended to improve students' financial planning skills, enhance their understanding of technology, and emphasize the importance of community engagement—all of which are shown to improve retention and completion. In addition, to help prepare our students to make important financial decisions, **the College's Financial Aid Office partnered with the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) to offer CashCourse, a free resource for students that teaches real-life money skills and key financial topics, such as understanding credit or budgeting basics (8FE 6).** A poster, presented at Achieving the Dream, illustrates how tutorials from Montco Money Matters map to student persistence (Figure 8.4).

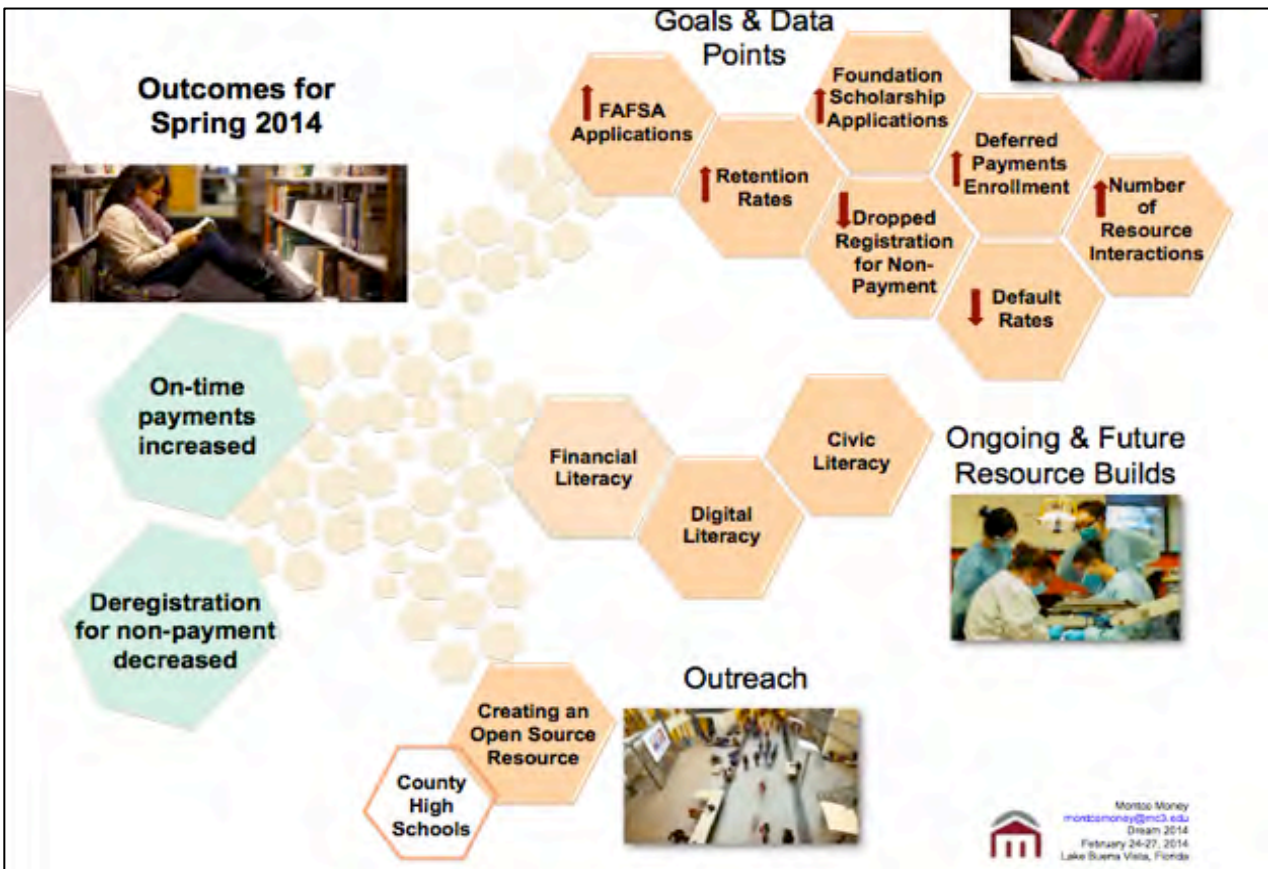


Figure 8.4: Developing Financial Literacy. Montco Money Matters, a student financial literacy resource, maps to registration and persistence outcomes, as well as to digital and civic literacy.

Working Group 5 noted that in Spring 2014 **the College renewed its transfer of credit policies**, in accordance with MSCHE guidelines, and improved related administrative processes. Although the College has always published its procedures regarding transfer of credit, it now has a Board-approved

statement that codifies and **expands those transfer policies**. As revised, the College allows up to 75 percent of the total certificate- or degree-requirements to be met by transfer credit, and applies a single policy to all forms of academic credit evaluated for equivalency. **The new policy clarifies procedures for the acceptance of transfer credit, provides criteria regarding the transfer of credit earned at other**

**institutions, reinforces the role of faculty and academic leadership in determining course equivalencies based on student learning outcomes, and addresses all forms of prior learning (Figure 8.5). Prior learning includes courses taken at other regionally accredited institutions, nationally recognized examinations such as Advanced Placement [AP], College Level Examination Program [CLEP], portfolio assessment and challenge exams, and articulation of credits based on professional certification and training) (8FE 7). The policy presents clear procedures for the evaluation of nationally recognized examinations, prior learning experience, and articulation credits, with web links for each. These links promote transparency and students' on-going review of transfer options. In addition, appeal procedures are included in this recommendation in order to provide students the opportunity to have due process regarding a decision related to transfer credit reviewed. Moreover, the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management has recently transitioned the evaluation of academic credentials from Advising to the Registrar's Office in order to provide consistency; it has also streamlined the notation of such credits on the students' transcripts, which also provides transparency and uniformity.**

*The College applies the following guidelines in order to award academic credit for prior learning:*

*I. The consideration of transfer credit will be determined by course equivalencies, including expected learning outcomes, with those of the College's curricula and standards.*

*II. Generally, credit will only be transferred from regionally accredited postsecondary institutions; however, the College recognizes valid educational experiences worthy of consideration outside of regionally accredited schools and has procedures to accommodate these based upon approval from the academic coordinator/ program director and documentation of course equivalencies, including expected learning outcomes.*

*III. In addition, the College awards academic credit and course placement to students based on previous academic, employment, military, and/or other learning experiences not earned in a traditional course. Credit is awarded for nationally recognized examinations [including Advanced Placement (AP) and College Level Examination Program (CLEP)], certifications, or by portfolio evaluation of prior learning, based on course equivalencies, including expected learning outcomes.*

*Figure 8.5: Revised Transfer of Credit Policy. A revised transfer of credit policy codifies the process of awarding academic credit for prior learning.*

**Finally, Working Group 5 recognized that the College's new Integrated Enrollment Services unit, launched in 2011, now provides efficient, high-quality access to services for new students.** The new department combines the functions of several areas—Admissions, Registration and Financial Aid/Payment, as well as the procurement of photo identification cards and parking stickers—into one convenient, streamlined system. Enrollment services assistants are cross-trained to provide a one-stop experience for enrolling students and **the new pathway greatly improves student access to the College.**



## Opportunities

The College uses a wide range of software and technology tools to support student retention and success, including admission funnel reports, an online admissions application, an applicant portal, portal alerts for student progression, Colleague's Communication Management Module, an automated graduation process, and the use of an official email system. **Even with all of these tools, predicting and managing student enrollment and persistence from semester-to-semester can be challenging.** Not only are community college students sensitive to changes in the local economy, but the uncertain financial environment in higher education also challenges their ability to pay from semester to semester. One area that the Working Group saw as an opportunity for improvement was the intersection of student admissions and the enrollment management processes, as the College requires advance notice to predict enrollment accurately to support resource planning. In some instances, enrollment trends varied from past history, necessitating a variety of scheduling changes very close to the start of a new semester. When enrollment increases or decreases without advance warning, student retention is jeopardized, were not clear and consistent systems in place to anticipate trends and manage student persistence issues. Steps on the path to a comprehensive plan have already been taken, and all program coordinators receive enrollment management reports on a weekly basis. A new Enrollment Management plan, developed in Spring 2014, is anticipated to contribute more information to enhance student persistence and retention strategies. **Working Group 5 saw an opportunity for the College assess the future success of its new comprehensive Enrollment Management Plan, which now includes enrollment projections, student recruitment data, and student-centered communication and retention strategies, and evaluate its ability to improve the prediction and management of student enrollment and persistence.**

In examining the variety of new initiatives around student success, **Working Group 5 also saw an opportunity to consolidate cohort assessment across various student interventions.** Although the College has excelled in collecting data for some cohort groups, most notably those affiliated with the **Student Success Initiative**, the Working Group noticed a proliferation of assessment plans for other student interventions. The Group suggested that other cohort groups should use similar KPIs to provide consistent assessment data, including those involving students with disabilities, international students, and Veterans. In another example, the College recently expanded the Minority Mentoring Program to include both men and women. Data collection should be streamlined to accurately assess the success of this expanded program and that assessment should be integrated with the evaluation of the other cohorts. Without overstating the importance, or understating the limitations of student surveys, the College should integrate assessment data culled from the CCSSE, Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, SENSE (Survey of Entering Student Engagement), and other survey data to and align feedback with ongoing initiatives. Finally, it was noted that consolidated assessment techniques might better inform the proposal to make Strategies for College Success (SCS 101) mandatory for all entering students, not just those who are placed into it or who opt into it. **Overall, the College should continue to strengthen student readiness and completion strategies by consolidating cohort assessment across various student interventions.**



## **Suggestions for Improvement**

**8.a. The College should assess the success of its new comprehensive Enrollment Management Plan and evaluate its ability to improve the prediction and management of student enrollment and persistence.**

(Theme 3: Continuous Institutional Renewal)

**8.b. The College should continue to strengthen student readiness and completion strategies by consolidating cohort assessment across various student interventions.**

(Theme 1: Student Success and Academic Excellence Supported by Data-Driven Assessment)



# Standard 9: Student Support Services

## Standard 9: Student Support Services



### “Intrusive” Advising Better Supports Student Completion

When the College looked at benchmarks concerning its students’ perception of advising support, it found a need for improved student satisfaction with advising services. Assessment data collated from various sources revealed that even though 73% of students indicated that the College provides support to them to help them succeed either often or very often (**CCSSE 2011**), five items related to academic advising with **gap scores** over 1.0 appeared in the 2011 **Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory**. Although these gap scores were comparable to national community college benchmarks, the Student Affairs and Enrollment Management division took action to reduce the perceived gap through a comprehensive redesign of the orientation, enrollment, and advising system, known as the **Advising Redesign Initiative**.

The Steering Committee that oversaw the Advising Redesign Initiative based its ideas on professional best practices in **intrusive advising** and the emerging **Completion by Design** models. Intrusive advising aims to create a system of intervention strategies that mandates advising contact and particularly targets students who might not otherwise seek advising. Supported by technology tools and the implementation of an Integrated Planning and Advising Support system grant through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Advising Redesign provides students with more than traditional advice about program, course scheduling, and transfer opportunities. This system:

- offers students an educational planning tool;
- facilitates intrusive advising through early and ongoing interventions;
- helps both faculty and advisors to monitor student progress and identify at-risk students, for whom additional intervention plans may then be created;
- gives students more feedback about their own academic progress; and
- allows advisors track student progress through completion.

Starting with a new student orientation and registration session upon enrollment, a student welcome day before the beginning of the semester, and a follow-up meeting between the fourth and eighth week of the first semester, advisors use the Student Educational Planning tool to begin to track student progress. On an ongoing basis, advisors then help undeclared students discover a major through career assessments, coach students to enroll in courses that count towards their major, ensure that students are progressing toward graduation and ensure that students who plan to transfer are taking courses that will transfer to their desired institution. In addition, the College implemented a Student Success Network with a new integrated early alert and scheduling tool (**Starfish**) that integrates advising, testing, tutoring and course information

that connects faculty with all the supports a student is accessing. According to a recent survey, half of all students have gained access to Starfish since the rollout, with 25% of students using the system on their own to make appointments. Seventy-five percent of those who scheduled appointments found the system to be “easy” or “very easy” to use. Compared to the same time during 2013, the volume of appointments made more than doubled (312 appointments versus 755) and, more importantly, the no-show rate has been cut in half (from 20% to 10%). Forty percent of current students have used Starfish to connect directly with an advisor, which supports the goal of connecting students with an individual to enhance their college experience. From a self-service perspective, the addition of the Student Educational Planning tool provides each student with a map of course offerings he or she needs to schedule in the future, and the tool helps each to register for needed courses directly from a personalized plan.

In addition, faculty and advisors are now using new Starfish Early Alert software to enter information regarding attendance, participation, and other indicators of student success. The software integrates pre-determined triggers based on data from other systems, such as the College’s learning management system, second-week attendance reporting, and student engagement with tutoring. The early alert system even allows faculty to provide students “kudos” in order to reinforce positive behaviors, such as participation in tutoring, strong performance on graded assignments, and demonstrated satisfactory progress. Early indications from the Spring 2014 pilot of the Starfish system were positive:

- Faculty members were able to indicate the primary reason why a student was performing unsatisfactorily (Figure 9.1).
- Faculty members were able to provide an exemplary grade to appropriate students at midterm.
- Students received instant notification via email of any unsatisfactory grade or the exemplary grade. Ninety-six percent of faculty teaching 14-week sections submitted their midterm grades via Starfish in Spring 2014 (1655 sections). Over 7000 unsatisfactory alerts and over 4500 “kudos” for good work were communicated to students during this time. For the first time, advisors were able to begin outreach to the students who had unsatisfactory grades. Nearly 30% of midterm alerts were “closed” because the advisor, supplementing the work of the faculty, also contacted the student and discussed his or her progress in the given course.

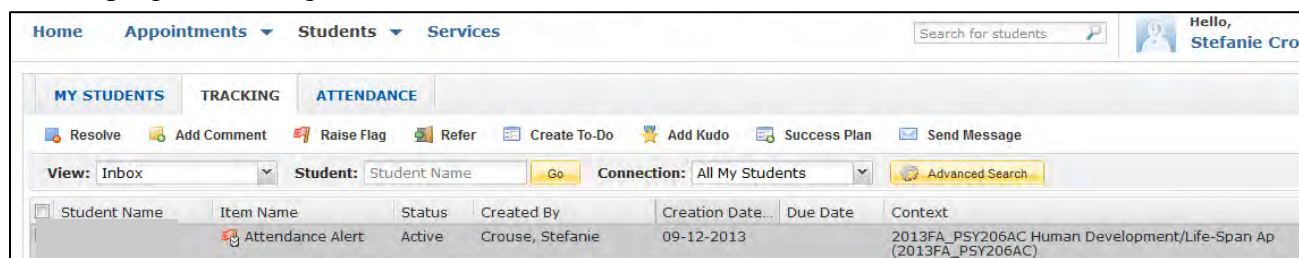


Figure 9.1: The Starfish Retention System. Starfish allows faculty members to track potential course completion issues and notify students of unsatisfactory progress quickly.

As the final step in the Advising Redesign Initiative, the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management is partnering with Blackboard Analytics to create an integrated dashboard, so that students, advisors, and faculty program coordinators can view student progress, based on data from multiple systems, in one place. This will allow students to see not only their planned courses, but also their progress on many levels to date. In short, the College is using intrusive advising proactively and transparently to provide students a clear pathway to completion and on-going feedback on their progress.

## Background and Overview

*N.B. Compliance items are indicated in bold and matched with the corresponding Fundamental Element (FE); see the Accreditation Readiness Roadmap for specific documents evidencing that compliance.*

**Student support services reflect the needs of the student population and sustain students' educational goals on an academic and on a personal level (9FE 1 and 3, Figure 9.2). Qualified faculty advisors, tutors, counselors and librarians manage these services (9FE 2).** In addition to the wide range of Student

Success Initiatives discussed in the chapter on Standard 8, academically the College offers broad support for struggling students, as the following examples demonstrate:



*Figure 9.2: Student Support. Student support services, including counseling and advising, sustain students' academic and personal goals.*

- **Over 1000 students attend non-mandatory Student Orientation sessions**, as do 350 parents, readying students for the first days of classes and setting expectations for college-level coursework. **Starting in Fall 2014, participation in New Student Orientation and Registration will be mandatory for first-time college students.**
- **Strategies for College Success (SCS 101) is required for all students placing into two or more areas of developmental course work (English, reading and math).** This two-credit class is an introduction to academic success strategies such as self-assessment and goal setting, study skills and time management and familiarization with college resources. This course is open for all students. Special sections for the **POWER Program** students (students with mental health challenges) and veterans have been offered. The **LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory)** indicates that students grow in all tested areas of student success, with the most growth in test-taking skills.
- **The Foundational Skills Lab is open seven days a week** and tutors are available to help any student taking an ESL or developmental class.
- **Free tutoring across multiple subjects is offered seven days a week in the Tutorial Center for both face-to-face and online students.** Over 3,000 students use this service each semester and all tutors are faculty members. Surveys indicate that students are generally pleased with the help they receive in the Tutorial Center.



- **The Minority Student Mentoring Initiative (MSMI)**, which began as the **Minority Male Mentoring Program**, has continued its service to the minority community and has expanded to include female students. The Initiative reaches approximately 110 students each semester.

**To assist students with personal challenges, the College offers a broad spectrum of services and support programs. Students are referred to these programs via procedures that are equitable, supportive, and sensitive (9FE 3).** Below are some examples of the support services on which students rely heavily, although the list is not exhaustive:

- During the Spring 2013 semester, **the Disability Services Office served 444 students, which was an increase of 24.36 percent from the previous year.** Services available for students include tutoring, academic advising, advocacy and supportive counseling, accommodations and documentation, and assistive technology.

- **A new Veterans Resource Center (VRC) has been established** on the Central Campus to provide services and assistance to veterans, service members, and spouse/dependents with their transition to college (Figure 9.3). Services include but are not limited to VA work study opportunities, Student Veteran Organization meeting headquarters, Veteran Service Team meetings, a veteran lounge and computer area, assistance with VA educational benefits, VA educational certifying officials and general VA information. The Center invites campus and community resources to provide workshops, presentations and other outreach events to assist veteran students with their transition to collegiate life. The Veteran's office supports our veterans with a lounge with WIFI, a study area and one computer. Study groups and yoga classes are offered. GI certification is provided. In the Fall of 2013, for example, a total of 316 students were assisted (259 veterans and 57 family members).



*Figure 9.3: Veterans Resource Center. Members of the College attend the opening of the new Veterans Resource Center.*

- **A free shuttle service transports students between Central and West campuses, and will transport them between the Central Campus, the Culinary Arts Institute, and the Ambler train station starting Spring 2015.** The Campus Shuttle program was launched in Fall 2010 to support the College's Student Success and Sustainability initiatives. Free of charge to students, faculty and staff, the Shuttle makes 10 trips daily, Monday through Friday. To meet increasing student demand, the College recently expanded to a 20-passenger, green vehicle, equipped with Wi-Fi.
- **The Student Support and Referral Team (SSRT), the College's mental health counseling staff, offers support and intervention.** The majority of students visit a team member for reasons of psychological distress, most referred by faculty. **Since its**

**inception, SSRT has responded to 673 contacts and 404 students have used this resource.** The counselors also keep a current a College-wide SSRT blog, accessible from the portal.

**In addition to support services, the College sustains a vibrant Student Government and more than 40 student clubs,** managed under the Student Leadership & Involvement (SL&I) Office. Students may participate in co-curricular activities that include leadership workshops, alternative Spring Breaks focused on community service and organizations, and a variety of co-curricular and civic activities. In fall 2014, the

Student Leadership and Involvement Office and **SGA** launched an online community resource through

**OrgSync**, to connect students to opportunities, to provide Virtual Campus students access to student co-curricular engagement resources, and provide students with co-curricular transcripts.



*Figure 9.4: Athletics Support Community Engagement. Athletics at the College was re-instituted five years ago, with a goal of increasing student-body engagement, contributing to the enrollment development goals, and serving as a positive focus of campus attention and activity.*

**Athletics is now in its fifth year of re-institution at the College, with a goal of enriching community college student life and enhancing student success (Figure 9.4).** The athletic program is open to all students for the purpose of fostering and enhancing student engagement outside of the classroom. Mustangs Athletics is a member of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA), which participates in Region XIX and the Eastern Pennsylvania Athletic Conference (EPAC). The current teams are comprised of four women's and three men's teams with over 100 student-athletes and an additional 20 coaches and administrative staff. The Mustangs compete in Men's Soccer, Women's Soccer, Women's Volleyball, Men's Basketball, Women's Basketball, Baseball, and Softball. **The same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern the College as a whole govern the Athletic program, as communicated in the Athletic Strategic Plan 2013-2017 (9FE 5).** Those students who commit themselves to participating in the athletic program are encouraged to enrich themselves as people as well as student-athletes. Most importantly, and the reason why athletics was re-instituted at the College, is that athletics at the community college level has been shown to increase student retention and persistence and to help all students maintain their involvement in higher education and in campus life. College data supports the finding (Figure 9.5) that athletes have high retention rates and above average success at MCCC.

The Working Group affirmed that the College and its students follow the published Student Code of Conduct and related processes outlined in the Board of Trustees Policy Manual. Reasonable procedures, available in both the Student Handbook and as policies on the College website, address student complaints and grievances (9FE 6). In fact, in AY13-14, the student academic grievance policy was reviewed and updated with minor changes; students had input into the changes through their representatives on the All-College Governance Committees. Both the Offices of Academic Affairs and of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs maintain confidential records of student complaints and grievances, all of which are kept in accordance with policies on regarding the security and privacy of student information (9FE 8 and 9).

success				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	NonSuccess	108	31.2	31.5
	Success	235	67.9	68.5
	Total	343	99.1	100.0
Missing	System	3	.9	
Total		346	100.0	

retention				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Completed	306	88.4	100.0
	System	40	11.6	
Total		346	100.0	

Figure 9.5. Community College Athletes Persist and Succeed. Athletes sport high retention rates and above average success at MCCC.

## Self-Study Methodology

Working Group 5 explored how the College addresses the various personal challenges students face, as well as how the College monitors student progress toward their academic goals. Specifically, the Working Group investigated how the College defines the role of academic advising in guiding all students, both face-to-face and online, through their academic planning and pathways, and how effective that academic advising is. In addition, Working Group 5 researched how the Student Success staff provides students with career preparation and related experiences, such as mentoring and internships, and how effective these experiences are. More broadly, the Group analyzed the co-curricular student offerings. In conducting its research, Working Group 5 interviewed key personnel and collected data from evaluations, research briefs and reports, in addition to other documents.

## Findings and Discussion

### Strengths

Coincident with its Advising Redesign Initiative, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management updated its Student Advising Learning Outcomes to address these and other assessment data (9FE 4, Figure 9.6). Measurement of the new outcomes is ongoing. Appendix 9.1 provides full assessment reporting on these Advising SLOs from AY13-14.

Advising Outcomes	Advising Activities to Support Outcomes
Outcome 1: Students select a program of study that matches their career goals and values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administer Pre-advising surveys to ask students to identify their program of study.</li> <li>Review program of study options during the redesign New Student Orientation presentation.</li> <li>Offer Career Assessments both online and by referral to the Career Services Office.</li> <li>Encourage students to explore potential majors/careers with the Focus2 career assessment, and to utilize Career Coach for career exploration</li> <li>Discuss program selection during the 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> week of the students' first semester at the College as part of the redesign program.</li> </ul>
Outcome 2: Students clarify challenges that may hamper goal achievement and discuss potential solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate through the Early Alert System between the student's advisor and faculty member(s)</li> <li>Works one-on-one with student to discuss the student's challenges, offering suggestions and resources available to support the student.</li> <li>Identify student needs and challenges and refer to the appropriate resources (MMP, KEYS, ACT 101, Disability Services, ESL, or outside resources)</li> <li>Ensure the redesign New Student Orientation includes a discussion of potential roadblocks and offers suggestions.</li> </ul>
Outcome 3. Students identify degree requirements and verify progress toward graduation through the use of the program evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold one-on-one meetings with advisors during the first four to eight weeks of their first semester to review the student's program evaluation and show the student how to interpret the report</li> <li>Offer Peer Mentor assistance in the Registration Lab</li> <li>Introduce students to the program evaluation is imbedded within the redesign New Student Orientation Program presentation.</li> </ul>
Outcome 4. Students develop an educational plan by identifying appropriate courses and the order in which they should be taken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow the student and advisor to establish an educational plan that is available to both student and advisor and may be updated by both. Prior to this, advisors worked one-on-one with students to develop an educational plan.</li> </ul>
Outcome 5. Students use technology resources to access Web Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporated online registration into the redesign presentation.</li> <li>Teach new students how to register using WebAdvisor and require students to register for their first semester during these sessions with the help of advisors and peer mentors.</li> <li>Ensure that the Registration Lab, which was established specifically to assist students having difficulty using Web Advisor, is staffed with peer mentors and is open for students to drop-in.</li> <li>Instruct students in the new educational planning tool, which appears to be more visual and system more user friendly than the current system..</li> </ul>
Outcome 6. Students recognize how their level of performance affects their educational goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate the importance of doing well into the redesign presentation.</li> <li>Monitor early alerts and contact their advisees when receiving an alert from a faculty member.</li> <li>Discuss the importance of grades, and highlight the importance of maintaining good grades for transfer and job search.</li> <li>Work with students on probation to help the student become a successful student.</li> </ul>

Figure 9.6: Advising SLOs with Related Activities. Advising outcomes guide activities and assessment in Student Affairs.

**In short, the Working Group noted strength in the College's ongoing strategies to assess student support services and its use of that assessment data for improvement (9FE 10).**



## Opportunities

As mentioned in the opening case study, as of the Spring 2014, the College is implementing new technology to support the Advising Redesign Initiative. As the College continues the rollout of its integrated planning and advising support system, with Starfish, Student Educational Planning tool, and the Blackboard Analytics dashboards, the Working Group suggests that **the College continue to evaluate the effectiveness of its new Advising Redesign**, particularly to ensure that the software meets student needs (**Suggestion 9.a**). Although the early results are encouraging, the College should monitor the new software systems. A particular concern of the Working Group was to ensure that Starfish is able to support the College's **Early Alert** system and directly refer students in crisis to the **SSRT**.

The Career Services Office provides a variety of career and job search counseling and coaching services to students and alumni to help them connect with employers and internship sites. Individual appointments are available for career counseling, for assistance in writing resumes, in planning job search strategies, and for practicing for job interviews. Two Career Expo events are held each year, one at Central Campus and one at West Campus. Last year, a total of 97 employers and 400+ students, alumni and community members attended the Central Expo and 45 employers and 120 students, alumni, and community members attended at West. Through the Perkins Grant, the College has recently appointed a Coordinator of Internships and Job Placement, with the objective of facilitating the placement of students into internships in their major courses of study and developing job opportunities. A central job posting website (FOCUS 2), a self-guided career exploration software package (Career Coach), and a career and job search software program are all available to students. Finally, "Work-Ready Wednesdays" at the West Campus provided students with access to an advisor available on Wednesdays at a table in the College cafeteria to address career and internship-related questions. Additionally, a review of resumes and mock interviews were conducted. And ongoing Career workshops are available on both campuses to teach students about writing resumes and cover letters, using networking concepts, interviewing and developing job search strategies.

Despite all of these services, however, students report inconsistent knowledge of the career service opportunities available; moreover, the use of some of these services and software tools is quite low. **Student Affairs and Enrollment Management should create a more robust Career Services office to help students with experiential learning, internships, and career paths (Suggestion 9.b)**. In particular, better marketing strategies to communicate the information out to a larger student population are needed.

## Suggestions for Improvement

**9.a. The College should continue to evaluate the effectiveness of its new Advising Redesign. (Theme 3: Continuous Institutional Renewal)**

**9.b. Student Affairs and Enrollment Management should create a more robust Career Services office to help students with experiential learning, internships, and career pathways. (Theme 1: Student Success and Academic Excellence Supported by Data-Driven Assessment)**



# Standard 10: Faculty

## Standard 10: Faculty



### Revising Evaluation Practices to Promote Teaching

“Student-centered” is not just a buzzword at the College—students are the focus of faculty achievement and that focus is reflected in the promotion and review process (Figure 10.1). After almost three years of committee work by the Faculty Evaluation Task Force, the College finished its overhaul of the faculty evaluation process. The Task Force revised faculty position descriptions, as the focus on “student success and successful completion” was replaced with an emphasis on “facilitating student learning and mastery of course content.” Position descriptions for counselors and librarians with faculty rank were also updated. Additionally, the Task Force recommended wide-ranging improvements to the established evaluation and promotion process. Course evaluation tools, classroom observation forms and point-of-service

surveys were all overhauled. Now, faculty members have the option of adding specific questions about their class in the online course evaluation software. The Task Force reviewed promotion and tenure guidelines for each rank, and

the evaluation process as a whole. Under the revised guidelines, achievements related to teaching excellence comprise at least 70% and, for new instructors, as much as 80%, of the criteria for faculty promotion. In addition, the Task Force recommended that committee service be limited for new faculty members until they are promoted beyond the rank of Instructor, in order to ensure a teaching focus. The Task Force also suggested revisions to the promotion portfolio; professional development is an explicit criterion now, supplementing the College and community service categories of the past. Creative activities and innovation in teaching approaches may now be considered as part of this professional development category. Finally, the faculty role in curriculum and assessment activities became part of the faculty handbook (Figure 10.2).



*Figure 10.1: Promoting Teaching Excellence. Dr. Anne Marie Donohue, winner of the 2011 Lindback Award for Teaching Excellence, integrates classroom lectures with student research. In 2006, she established a partnership with the Noyes Foundation for Schizophrenia Research; several of her students went on to co-author articles in such publications as the Journal of Clinical Psychology.*



*Figure 10.2: Faculty Handbook. The online handbook outlines teaching and assessment responsibilities.*

## Background and Overview

*N.B. Compliance items are indicated in bold and matched with the corresponding Fundamental Element (FE); see the Accreditation Readiness Roadmap for specific documents evidencing that compliance.*

**The College's reputation for academic excellence attracts qualified, dedicated professionals who devise, develop, monitor, and support its programs (10FE 1 and 2).** The College employs 185 full-time teaching faculty and 22 additional full-time counselors and librarians with faculty rank. As well, more than 550 part-time faculty members teach at the College. **Both part-time and full-time faculty members must hold advanced qualifications** (at least a Master's degree or its equivalent) in their discipline and many bring professional experience and research expertise to enrich the student-learning environment **(10FE 8 and Figure 10.1).**

**Published and implemented standards and procedures guide appointment, promotion and tenure processes of all faculty members (10FE 6 and 8).** While Human Resources maintains a portal site that outlines all faculty hiring procedures, the Office of Academic Affairs maintains an online faculty handbook that outlines instructor responsibilities and the promotion process for both full-time and part-time faculty members. New full-time faculty

members are required to attend an initial orientation series and then to participate in a two-year mentoring program before their first promotion. Faculty seeking promotion must demonstrate teaching excellence, professional development and service to the College (and each of these three is evaluated differently depending on the rank for which the faculty member is applying). **A teaching philosophy that links scholarship, teaching, student learning, research interests and services is a required element of the promotion portfolio (10FE 5 and Figure 10.3).** Part-time faculty are also invited to all professional development activities and department meetings offered by the College. **The Faculty Union contract codifies responsibilities, promotion schedules, service requirements, the attainment of seniority, workload and pay for both full-time and part-time faculty members (10FE 7 and 8).** It should be noted that the Faculty Union represents part-time faculty members, and governs how they earn seniority, are awarded courses, and are eligible for health care benefits.

**Procedures codified in the Faculty Union Contract also govern the faculty grievance, discipline, and dismissal process, based on principles of fairness and regard for the rights of all (10FE 6).** Board of Trustees Policy 6.8 also addresses procedures for faculty discipline. The Faculty Union Contract, as well as a variety of Board policies governing sexual harassment, equal opportunity, non-discrimination, anti-nepotism, and diversity, ensures that the College adheres to equitable practices with regard to faculty employment. **Three items, Article 10 of Faculty Union contract and Board Policies 5.10 and 5.11, support academic freedom as it relates to teaching, research, tenure, intellectual property, and copyright (10FE 9).**

### Teaching Philosophy (Sample)

*Clay Bedford writes, "You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, he will continue the learning process as long as he lives." . . . I believe the learning process does not cease with a degree from Montgomery County Community College. Instead, I measure my success by the motivation I instill in each student to continue learning beyond our classroom.*

*~ Portfolio Excerpt, Assistant Professor of Mathematics*

*Figure 10.3: Sample Teaching Philosophy. All faculty members must submit a teaching philosophy as part of the promotion portfolio.*

Faculty excellence is assessed in multiple ways. **The College follows protocols for regularly scheduled, student course evaluations, faculty self-assessment, classroom observations, and administrative evaluations (10FE 7). Full-time faculty members participate in a minimum of two days of professional development per academic year; in addition, evidence of ongoing professional development is a required element of the promotion portfolio (10FE 3).** Additional opportunities for professional development are offered during the academic year. **Funds for academic conferences and other professional development activities are available** through the divisions, the Office of the Academic Vice President and Provost, and via applications for **Pearlstine grants. Information Technology (IT) offers group and individual classes, tutoring, and assistance from Instructional Designers for all faculty members (10FE 4).** The College also has an application procedure for faculty sabbaticals and sabbatical guidelines, which is outlined in the Faculty Union contract.

### Self-Study Methodology

During the Self-Study, Working Group 6 investigated the process used to evaluate faculty members and how feedback from faculty evaluations is used to improve teaching. They also researched how the hiring, reappointment, tenure, and promotion process is periodically reviewed and communicated. Of particular interest to Working Group 6 was how committee service is shared among faculty and what role it plays in the promotion process. The Working Group examined how adjunct faculty members are integrated into divisions and how the quality of teaching by part-time faculty members is monitored and developed. Finally, they examined support for professional development activities for faculty members. The Group's research was guided by extensive evidence, which included committee reports, interviews with appropriate personnel at the College, a wide ranging series of inquiries directed to senior administrators, division deans, program coordinators, faculty, and an assemblage of other relevant documents and information.



*Figure 10.4: Committed to Student Success. Professor Beccaris-Pescatore, winner of the 2014 Pearlstine Award for Teaching Excellence, leads an economic class.*

### Findings and Discussion

#### Strengths

**Working Group 6 found that the College emphasized the importance of its students in all of its discussions of faculty effectiveness.** Faculty service to the College not only encompasses administrative elements, but also includes a commitment to student life. The College at large, as well as individual Divisions, host creative faculty projects, such as the faculty-led and student-attended Issues and Insights series, faculty-moderated student theatre, music, and dance performances, and poetry readings by faculty and students. Finally, each year members of the College community nominate faculty for the College's Award for Teaching Excellence (named the Pearlstine or Lindback Award, depending on the year), which is given at Commencement (Figure 10.4). **And as mentioned in the "Thinking Big" case study above,**

**the Working Group affirmed that the College regularly assesses its policies and procedures with regard to faculty evaluation (10 FE 10).**

**The Working Group was tasked with looking at the ways in which part-time faculty participate in the life of the College and found that the College has continued its efforts to engage part-time faculty members.** At the macro-level, new part-time faculty members attend orientation sessions each semester that review the ABC's of navigating the campus and using educational technology. The College hosts a part-time Faculty Appreciation Dinner each August prior to the start of classes. All part-time faculty members are invited to professional development workshops and seminars, some of which are offered online and on Saturdays. The Center for Faculty Development offers a six-week online course on "Teaching Excellence" every semester and during the summer; to date, 137 part-time faculty members have completed the certificate. A Professional Development Day specifically designed for adjunct faculty was conducted in October 2013. The College maintains a faculty web page with links to teaching and learning resources and sponsors a part-time faculty Teaching Excellence Award, which recognizes two adjuncts annually. Part-time faculty members are eligible to apply for a part-time faculty development grant. A part-time faculty newsletter disseminates information about adjunct faculty needs, questions, issues and concerns. Working Group 6 also found that each division has created a distinct approach to engaging adjunct faculty through lunch meetings, mentoring programs, and, in some cases, the sharing of best practices.

## **Opportunities**

Although the College has made a concerted effort to achieve an appropriate ratio of full-time to part-time faculty members, Working Group 6 found that it does not reach this goal in some divisions every semester. The ratio of full-time to part-time faculty should be analyzed annually and used to make informed decisions on funding new faculty positions. Working Group 6 anticipates that many full-time faculty members will retire over the next several years as a result of the Voluntary Retirement Incentive Plan. **Working Group 6 suggests that the College continue to monitor the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty and to prioritize full-time hiring, as appropriate, to maintain this ratio.**

The College has a strong system of faculty participation in governance, one that requires many hours of committee service from the full-time faculty. **However, Working Group 6 found that such committee service is sometimes distributed unevenly, particularly for those service positions that are appointed, not elected.** Generally, committee service is undertaken by what Working Group 6 called a "core of full-time faculty" and is avoided by some other faculty members. The inconsistent methods used to determine who serves on committees tend to overburden some faculty members, as those who are willing to serve often end up serving on multiple committees simultaneously. This problem is exacerbated in divisions with fewer faculty members, such as the Division of Business and Entrepreneurial Initiatives. For example, in the past, some untenured full-time or probationary part-time faculty members have served on All-College Committees, which places unwarranted stress on new faculty members. According to College procedure, the division Deans must endorse full-time faculty members for governance committee appointments and submit the names of representatives to the Provost. Service on committees that requires only the Dean's appointment (such as search or *ad hoc* committees) can also be distributed unevenly within divisions. **Working Group 6 observed that the Deans**



**should to establish a clear procedure to insure that committee assignments are shared equitably among all full-time faculty members. Faculty leaders should also support processes that ensure that all full-time faculty members in each division share service.**

While the Faculty Evaluation Task Force has recommended many improvements to the established evaluation process, **Working Group 6 also advised that the College look carefully at the connection between its professional development offerings and student success.** Some attention should be paid to the relevance of offerings put forward by the Center for Faculty Development, particular during the opening day or January professional development sessions. In the current absence of a director for the Center, a faculty advisory group or some other mechanism might be put in place to make sure offerings address faculty interests, particularly since the ongoing monthly sessions seem heavily weighted toward technology training. **In particular, Working Group 6 recommended that the College should try to determine which professional development activities are most helpful in improving student learning and offer development opportunities that directly support that goal.**

**Finally, Working Group 6 found that while the Faculty Diversity Fellows program has been successful, additional measures are needed to increase diversity in hiring, promotion, and evaluation.** A relatively low number (11%) of faculty members identify themselves as members of a minority group. The Faculty Diversity Fellowship Program has added a full-time temporary faculty member from an under-represented group to a different division each year. However, it seems problematic that the faculty member's first year as a diversity fellow does not count towards his or her promotion and tenure, should that fellow succeed in securing a full-time position with the College. This policy decision arguably detracts from the attractiveness of the fellowship. In fact, not only did Working Group 6 see the need for a policy change, but the Group also saw an opportunity to expand the Diversity Fellowship Program. Expansion would help the College make more progress towards diversity faculty hiring. As well, the Deans could identify and cultivate part-time minority faculty for consideration as Faculty Diversity Fellows.

Working Group 6 also considered other opportunities for diversifying the faculty. For example, the College might develop a diversity representative on each search committee to facilitate greater inclusion in the candidate and finalist pool. The Office of Academic Affairs might further emphasize initiatives such as the Faculty Diversity Grant program into the evaluation process for promotion. This grant supports diversity initiatives in either pedagogy or curriculum development. The College might encourage faculty to participate in scholarly and pedagogical professional development activities that will lead them to introduce more diverse topics into existing courses. Finally, faculty could use class activities related to the annual Presidential Symposium, which supports civil rights advocacy, as opportunity to incorporate diversity into College offerings. Each of these ideas would help increase diversity in the faculty hiring, promotion, the evaluation process, and teaching. **In short, while the Faculty Diversity Fellow program has been successful, the College should explore the feasibility of expanding the program and creating additional measures to increase diversity in the faculty hiring, promotion, and evaluation process.**

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

- 10.a. The College should continue to monitor the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty and prioritize full-time hiring, as appropriate, to strive to meet this ratio.**  
(Theme 3: Continuous Institutional Renewal)
- 10.b. The Deans of the academic divisions should strive for an equitable process when determining faculty committee service, particularly for service that is appointed, not elected. Faculty leaders should also support processes that ensure that all full-time faculty members in each division share service.**  
(Theme 4: College Values)
- 10.c. The College should determine whether and how professional development offerings for faculty members contribute to student success.**  
(Theme 1: Student Success and Academic Excellence Supported by Data-Driven Assessment)
- 10.d. While the Faculty Diversity Fellow program has been successful, the College should explore the feasibility of expanding the program and creating additional measures to increase diversity in the faculty hiring, promotion, and evaluation process.**  
(Theme 4: College Values)



# Standard 11: Educational Offerings

## Standard 11: Educational Offerings



### Supporting Transfer Success Through Curricular Revision

According to a transfer study completed by the Office of Institutional Research in 2012, over 60% of those students who earned a degree from MCCC transfer to four-year institutions. Of those who transfer, more than 60% complete a four-year degree. Of those who transfer before earning a degree, the number of students who graduate from a four-year institution hovers around 50%. There is also a correlation between the number of credits earned while at MCCC and the likelihood of successful completion of a bachelor's degree. The more credits a student completes at the College, the more likely they are to be successful completing a BA or BS degree.

New statewide **Transfer and Articulation of Credit (TAOC)** policies, which govern the guaranteed transferability of foundational courses offered by **Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE)** institutions as well as selected program-to-program agreements, have been the catalyst for significant and successful changes to the College's educational offerings. In response to TAOC, the College has orchestrated a variety of curricular revisions over the past three years. These revisions have positively affected the transferability of MCCC programs and courses and will likely increase four-year transfer rates. To date, eleven programs have been altered to become TAOC-compliant, facilitating the seamless transfer of students in those programs to corresponding four-year programs at the 14 participating PASSHE schools. In addition, participation in the thirty-credit TAOC framework (foundational courses with common outcomes accepted at all state systems institutions) has spurred the development of transfer opportunities at many private, non-PASSHE colleges and universities. In fact, since the College has revised its programs to participate in the TAOC initiative, MCCC has signed 40 new articulation agreements, twenty-one of which are with non-PASSHE institutions:

- **Business Administration** to Arcadia University, Cabrini College, Chestnut Hill College, La Salle University, Temple University, Widener University, Wilmington University
- **Education in the Early Years** to Arcadia University, LaSalle University, Temple University
- **Computer Science** to Arcadia University, Chestnut Hill College, Gwynedd Mercy University, LaSalle University
- **Mathematics** to Arcadia University, Chestnut Hill College, La Salle University
- **Social Sciences, Psychology** to Chestnut Hill College
- **Communication** to DeSales University, Widener University

Overall, the transferability of TAOC-compliant programs will likely help students become interested in starting a degree at community college and then progressing to completion at a variety of PASSHE or non-PASSHE partner institutions.

## Background and Overview

*N.B. Compliance items are indicated in bold and matched with the corresponding Fundamental Element (FE); see the Accreditation Readiness Roadmap for specific documents evidencing that compliance.*

**The College boasts robust educational offerings in five academic areas--Arts and Humanities, Business and Entrepreneurial Studies, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), Health Science, and Social Sciences. Students may enroll in 82 associate degree programs, 28 of which are transfer degrees (AS or AA) and 54 of which are workforce degrees (AAS). Most degree programs may be completed by earning between 60 and 64 credits, with the notable exception of the Nursing degree, which requires 70 credits. Seven of the College's programs are also accredited through their own professional bodies (Figure 11.1). Finally, the College offers 34 certificates, 11 of which are "stackable" specialty certificates, meaning they fit easily within a related degree offering (11FE 1 and 2). Transfer credit is awarded according to policies posted on the external website; credit may be awarded based on course equivalencies, prior learning assessment, review of learning outcomes, standardized exams, or other methods of evaluating training or education (11FE 9).**

### Professionally Accredited Programs at MCCC

- ✓ The Dental Hygiene program is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA).
- ✓ Education in the Early Years: Birth through Fourth Grade is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- ✓ The Fire Science program is accredited by the International Fire Science Accreditation Congress (IFSAC).
- ✓ The Medical Assisting and Surgical Technology programs are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) on the recommendation of the Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB).
- ✓ The Medical Laboratory Technician program and Phlebotomy course are accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS).
- ✓ The Nursing program is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), formerly the NLNAC.
- ✓ The Radiography program is accredited by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT).

*Figure 11.1: Externally Accredited Programs. Seven of the College's programs are accredited by external organizations.*

Faculty coordinators from the program's relevant discipline sponsor and assess all programs of study and **ensure that each program offered by the College fosters a coherent student learning experience (11FE 2). The learning outcomes for each program of study, which are approved by the Assessment Committee, the All-College Curriculum Committee, and the Board of Trustees, appear in the online catalog immediately before the suggested sequence of courses for the program (11FE 3). Each of the 82 degree programs shares a common General Education Core, through which students meet the 13 Core goals described in Chapter 12 (11FE 1 and 2), and during which students encounter a variety of information and learning resources (11FE 7). Information literacy and computer fluency are mandatory components of all programs, and most programs meet those requirements though specific courses designed by discipline faculty and assessed collaboratively by discipline faculty and librarians (in the case of information literacy) (11FE 6).**

Students may take courses online, in hybrid format, or in traditional classroom settings. Courses are offered during fifteen-week Fall, Spring, and Summer terms, ten- or seven-week accelerated Fall or Spring terms, six-week Summer terms, or during a new and intensive Winter



term, known as Winterim. Regardless of location or delivery mode, the quality of instruction and the rigor of courses is guided by the College's credit-hour policy and the maintenance of standard course outlines (which include student outcomes and assessment criteria) (11FE 10 and 12). Supporting these standards are a variety of assessment tools, including the **Distance Education Rubric for Course Assessment by Instructors (DERCA)**, which is a rubric used by online instructors to review best practices, apply sound instructional design principles, and to ensure compliance with accreditation standards, and the **Matrix of Instructional Engagement (MIE)**, which records instructional hour equivalencies for online interactions (11FE 8 and 10 and Figure 11.2).

INSTRUCTOR <u>SAMPLE</u>		COURSE NAME & SECTION		SEMESTER		
Activity	Activity Goal	Instruction Hour Equivalent	Total Time of Activity for Course in Hours	Indicate Best Practice(s) Met by Activity	Indicate Assessment Used	Indicate Type(s) of Interaction
Blogs, Journals, Logs	To use personal (authentic) writings to facilitate communication between the reader and the author.	500 words = 1 hour	2 hours	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BP 1 <input type="checkbox"/> BP 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BP 2 <input type="checkbox"/> BP 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BP 3 <input type="checkbox"/> BP 6 <input type="checkbox"/> BP 7	Written Assignments ▼	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student-student <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student-instructor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student-content
Problem Solving & Case Studies	To employ higher order thinking to solve real-world problems individually or in groups	In depth case = 3 hours Less depth = less time	1.5 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> BP 1 <input type="checkbox"/> BP 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BP 2 <input type="checkbox"/> BP 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BP 3 <input type="checkbox"/> BP 6 <input type="checkbox"/> BP 7	Rubrics ▼	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student-student <input type="checkbox"/> Student-instructor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student-content
Discussion Forums	To use written posts to promote instructor-student and student-student communication.	Simple posting/no replies = 15 minutes In depth posting/no replies = 30 minutes In depth posting with references and replies = 1 hour	7 hours	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BP 1 <input type="checkbox"/> BP 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BP 2 <input type="checkbox"/> BP 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BP 3 <input type="checkbox"/> BP 6 <input type="checkbox"/> BP 7	Graded Discussion ▼	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student-student <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student-instructor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student-content

Figure 11.2: Mapping Instructional Activities to Credit Hours. The Matrix of Instructional Engagement (MIE) maps instructional activities to credit hours. It also allows instructors to evaluate their use of best practices, types of online interaction, and use of assessment tools.

Any program that requires service learning, co-curricular, or extra-curricular experiences (such as Nursing, Exercise Science, Culinary Arts, and so on), assesses those activities annual **Program Analysis Review (PAR)** and the five-year **Academic Program Review (APR)** (11FE 4). **Strategies for College Success 101 (SCS 101)**, which introduces approaches to academic success, study skills and time management, familiarization with college resources, and appreciation of cultural diversity, includes individualized academic advising by the course instructor. **SCS 101 is mandatory for all students testing into two or more developmental courses, and optional for all other students; it is assessed as part of the Student Success Initiative (11FE 4).**

**Robust library and IT services support students' educational needs. The Brendlinger Library at the Blue Bell Campus and the West Campus Library offer online resources, student assistance, and physical study and computing spaces in support of the College's educational programs (11FE 5), as described in the Library Annual Report. From 2010 to 2012, The Brendlinger Library underwent a major transformation as part of the renovation to College Hall, which was mostly completed by the summer of 2012. In response to suggestions in the 2010 PRR, the Library has made great strides in assessing the effectiveness**

of its resources and its alignment with program curricula. Improvements include use of surveys, data analysis, usage statistics, and circulation statistics. **Working Group 7 also found that the College excels in technological resources, equipment, and training for faculty and staff and works hard to foster technological competency for students through its curriculum, online support, and the availability virtual learning (11FE 5).** In addition, the College is currently developing a number of tools that will further meet Educational Planning needs, including a “smart block” student scheduling system and an educational “pathway builder” tool.

## Self-Study Methodology

Working Group 7 was charged with exploring how the College's program offerings meet changing student and employment needs, as well as how the College takes into account the needs of students in determining how (online, face-to-face, hybrid), when (time of day, semester), and where (Central, West, online, offsite) courses and programs are offered. Working Group 7 explored how articulation initiatives affect the College curricula and the transferability of programs and courses. It also researched how successful the College's students are upon transfer or completion. Finally, the Working group analyzed whether the College's technology and library resource offerings support the College's curricula. The Working Group' methodology included interviewing select faculty members, coordinators, deans, and other administrators and collecting surveys, the results of which were compared with interviews to uncover alternative viewpoints.

## Findings and Discussion

### Strengths

The College meets changing student academic and career needs through continued review and updating of program offerings. In particular, **Working Group 7 found an emphasis on Academic Affairs renewal under the leadership of the new Provost, Dr. Bastecki-Perez.** The Office of Academic Affairs has focused particularly on adjusting degree programs to meet workforce development needs, adding programs that it anticipates will be in high demand, cutting programs that are no longer generating adequate enrollment, and accommodating state transfer and articulation requirements. The revised Academic Program Review process includes focus groups that incorporate questions regarding the validity of current programs to address student needs, employment opportunities and needs of employers. SWOT analysis and commentary by Advisory Committees are also included in the process. Figure 11.3 documents the variety of methods that the College uses to review educational offerings.

Method(s)	Description	Supporting Data/Review Elements
<b>Curriculum Committee Governance Process</b>	College governance process by which a representative body reviews and approves curriculum changes. Faculty, Provost, President, Board of Trustees Curriculum Committee and Board of Trustees are all involved.	Document Set: 11.4; 11.5
<b>Professional Program Accreditation</b>	Programs achieving accreditation meet the standards as required by their accrediting body	Document Set: 11.31; 11.32; 11.33; 11.34; 11.35; 11.36; 11.37; 11.38; 11.39
<b>Academic Program Reviews (APR)</b>	College's five year program of study and unit reviews and evaluation process (includes performance data and update recommendations)	Document Set: 11.17; 11.86
<b>Annual Report Cards (ARC) &amp; Program Analytics Report (PAR)</b>	College's annual program review and evaluation process (includes performance data)	Document Set: 11.17; 11.86
<b>Advisory Boards engagement and reviews</b>	Twice a year, at minimum, engagement for review and input from professional and community member regarding terminal degree (AAS) programs.	Process Coordination through Academic Affairs; Minutes from Individual Program Meetings
<b>Transfer Articulation Oversight Committee (TAOC) Guidelines</b>	Standards and processes provided through statewide TAOC guidelines	Document Set: 11.18; 11.25
<b>Initiatives Studies</b>	Special initiatives, such as CAI, CES, and VC, are evaluated and vetted through independent studies.	Review and evaluation documents and process for CAI, CES, and VC initiatives
<b>High Priority Occupations and Future Needs Studies Reviews</b>	Office of Academic Affairs reviews data and recommends program reviews or new initiatives to discipline Deans and faculty.	Documents available in Office of Academic Affairs
<b>Surveys of Employers and Employment Trends</b>	Program or College level reviews in these areas/of this data as part of the APR process.	Documents available in Office of Academic Affairs
<b>Observation of National Trends and Use of Consultants</b>	At the discretion of the Provost, selected initiatives employ consultants and external research to inform proposed change.	Documents available in Office of Academic Affairs

*Figure 11.3: Review of Educational Offerings. The College uses a variety of methods to review and update its educational offerings.*

Since the 2010 PRR, 63 degree or certificate programs have been reviewed, leading to new additions, modifications, or deletions from the college catalog (11FE 1 and 2 and Figure 11.4). During the same period, the faculty, led by the new Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment, have reviewed the learning outcomes of 990 courses, inactivating 130 courses for alignment reasons while proposing 204 modifications to course outcomes. This data evidences the College's focus on academic renewal of its educational offering that is both ongoing and strategic.

2011-2012	Division	Action	Credential/Degree	Program of Study
	AH	New	Specialty Certificate	Public Relations
	BCS	New	Certificate	Culinary Arts with concentration in Professional Culinary Arts and Professional Baking and Pastry Arts
	BCS	New	Certificate of Completion	Virtual Assistance
	HS	New	Certificate of Completion	Medical Office Assistant
	SS	New	AA	Education in the Middle Years: Fourth through Eight Grade
	BCS	Modification	AS	Business Administration
	BCS	Modification	AAS	Culinary Arts
	BCS	Modification	AAS	Office Administration with concentration in Virtual Assistance
	MSAT	Modification	AS	Computer Science
	MSAT	Modification	AA	Mathematics
	SS	Modification	AA	Education in the Early Years: Birth through Fourth Grade
	SS	Modification	AA	Social Sciences with concentration in Psychology
	BCS	Deletion	AS	Business Administration International Option
	HS	Deletion	Certificate	Surgical Technology
	MSAT	Deletion	AS	Biological Science
2012-2013	Division	Action	Credential/Degree	Program of Study
	SS	New	Certificate of Completion	Homeland Security
	AH	Modification	AA	Communications
	AH	Modification	AFA	Fine Art
	AH	Modification	AA	Theatre Arts
	BEI	Modification	AAS	Culinary Arts with concentrations in Professional Culinary Art and Baking and Pastry Arts
	BEI	Modification	Certificate	Culinary Arts in Baking and Pastry Arts
	BEI	Modification	Certificate	Culinary Arts in Professional Culinary Art
	HS	Modification	AAS	Surgical Technology
	STEM	Modification	AAS	Computer Networking
	STEM	Modification	Certificate	Computer Networking
	STEM	Modification	AS	Engineering Science
	SS	Modification	AAS	Criminal Justice
	SS	Modification	AA	Social Sciences with concentration in Geography: Urban and Regional Planning
	SS	Modification	AA	Social Sciences with concentration in History
	AH	Deletion	AAS	Digital Design with Computer Graphics and Multimedia Options
	STEM	Inactivation	AAS	Automotive Technology
	STEM	Inactivation	Certificate	Automotive Technology
	STEM	Deletion	AAS	Computer Aided Drafting and Design
2013-2014	Division	Action	Credential/Degree	Program of Study
	HS	New <sup>a</sup>	AAS	Occupational Therapy Assistant
	HS	New <sup>a</sup>	AAS	Physical Therapy Assistant
	STEM	New	Certificate of Completion	Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing
	STEM	New	Certificate	Cloud Computing
	STEM	New	AS	Life Science
	HS	Modification	AAS	Health Services Management
	HS	Modification	Certificate of Completion	Medical Coding
	STEM	Modification	AAS	Engineering Technology
	BEI	Deletion	Certificate	International Studies
	HS	Deletion	AAS	Health Service Management with concentration in Holistic Health
	HS	Deletion	AAS	Technical Studies
	HS	Deletion	Certificate	Technical Studies
	STEM	Deletion	Certificate	Computer-Aided Drafting and Design Technology
	STEM	Deletion	AAS	Engineering Technology, Nanofabrication Option
	SS	Deletion	Certificate	Child Care
	SS	Deletion	Certificate of Completion	Child Development Associate

Figure 11.4: Evidence of Academic Affairs Renewal. Programs and certificates added, renewed, or deleted between 2011 and 2014.

**Finally, the Working Group found the College's transfer opportunities to be one of its perennial strengths.** The Group noted that a growing number of students have been transferring to local institutions such as Temple University, West Chester University, The Pennsylvania State University (all campuses), Kutztown University, and Villanova University. The most common institutions from which students graduate upon transfer are Temple University, West Chester University, Pennsylvania State University, Drexel University, and Gwynedd Mercy University. In addition, three schools have very high graduation rates for MCCC students, despite not enrolling high numbers of transfer students: Thomas Jefferson University, Cabrini College and Millersville University. When examining only institutions that have received more than 100 students in a five-year period, Thomas Jefferson University, Eastern University, La Salle University, Villanova University, and Cabrini College have the highest graduation rates for transfer students (ranging from 70% to 56%).



## Opportunities

Although Working Group 7 found that a complex and multi-step process is used to determine how (online, face-to-face, hybrid), when (time of day, semester), and where (Central, West, online, offsite) courses and programs are offered, the College still struggles with the process for rolling course schedules from one academic term to the next and with the overall process for scheduling classes. On the positive side, the sources of input used in developing and modifying the schedule are varied and include a pre-advising survey, input from advisors, input from students, waitlist student data, and weekly enrollment reports. As of Fall 2013, an increased effort has been made to follow the “smart code” section schema to minimize scheduling conflicts and maximize the ability of students to fit courses into a convenient roster. Changes in the schedule now allow students to maximize schedules around their employment and other obligations (family, etc.) by standardizing start/end timing. In addition, the most heavily enrolled courses are offered at times in the schedule that will serve the maximum number of students efficiently.

Working Group 7 found, however, two areas where ongoing improvements might be made. First, student input into course scheduling is limited and the **SGA** recommends an increased voice for students in the course offering and scheduling process. Advisors often gather first-hand student feedback on course offerings; however, this process needs to be formalized in order to get that information to influence the course schedule. While some input from students has been implemented in the past – for example, as a result of feedback from students in the Human Services (HSW) program, HSW courses will now be offered as face-to-face courses at West campus—again, this process needs to be formalized in order to capture that information. In addition, conversations with students revealed that the current process for waitlisting students could be improved. Waitlisting procedures particularly affect students in the sciences, where early “drop rates” tend to be high. Efforts to enhance the analysis and use of weekly enrollment reports (to ascertain which courses are experiencing high enrollment and waitlists) might also be more widely implemented. Working Group 7, therefore, found an opportunity for additional improvements in a scheduling process, which is often removed from student input. The Working Group suggested that **the College supplement its process for determining course offerings by implementing systematic methods for capturing student input. The College should then use this information to inform scheduling (that is, what, where, when, and how courses are offered) (Suggestion 11.a).**

Secondly, it is clear to the Working Group that students who graduate from the College have a greater chance of graduating with their bachelor’s degree upon transfer than do those who transfer without receiving a credential. **However, the College maintains agreements with a number of partner schools where the graduation rate of former MCCC students is quite low. Future research should examine the effect of program-to-program agreements on student transfer, as well as students’ successful completion at the transfer institution.** This research can be part of IR’s biannual transfer study. IR might also examine the effect of the TAOC initiative on student transfer practice, as well as success in completion (although some of this work will be done on the state-level through TAOC’s assessment plan). **The College should form strategic relationships with those partners that have shown a consistent pattern of successful transfer, including degree completion, for MCCC students (Suggestion 11.b).**



## **Suggestions for Improvement**

- 11.a. The College should supplement its process for determining course offerings by implementing systematic methods for capturing student input. The College should then use this information to inform scheduling (that is, what, where, when, and how courses are offered).**

(Theme 2: Collaboration and Communication)

- 11.b. The College should form strategic relationships with those partners that have shown a consistent pattern of successful transfer, including degree completion, for MCCC students.**

(Theme 1: Student Success and Academic Excellence Supported by Data-Driven Assessment)



# Standard 12: General Education

## Standard 12: General Education



### From Many to One: Unifying the General Education Core

The College implemented a new General Education Core curriculum (known locally as the “**Core**”) in Fall 2011. The College community had been working for several years to define a single set of core competencies that would be achieved by all students in all degree programs, regardless of whether a student seeks to earn a workforce or transfer degree. The question asked was an important one and one that was not common at community colleges: “What should every student educated at Montgomery County Community College know?” Faculty input was obtained via emails, discussions in a Core Curriculum Blackboard course, face-to-face forums, divisional meetings, and a reception held with the President; a summary of those meetings was posted on the College’s internal website and on the Core Steering Committee Blackboard site. In addition, 150 Advisory Committee members, partner high schools, the administrative Academic Affairs Committee, the Student Life Committee, and 227 students were surveyed to assess cohesiveness of the final answer. Finally, off-site visits were made to explore a variety of models for the revision, assessment, and implementation of the new Core. A complete history of the development and implementation of the College’s Core is provided in Appendix 12.1.

Unlike the multiple Core curricula that existed for different programs prior to the revision, this new, singular Core anchors all student learning at the College. Developed over a period of five academic years, the new Core more closely aligns with the life-long learning needs of our community. More importantly, the implementation of a new Core represented a shift in pedagogical approach, one that moves away from viewing General Education as a set series of courses to one that views General Education as the mastery of specific competencies—competencies that enhance students’ intellectual growth and better prepare them for the twenty-first century workforce.

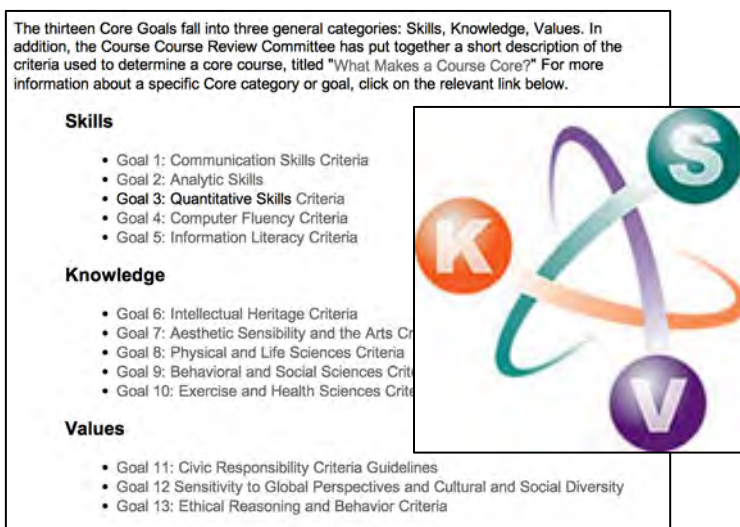


Figure 12.1: Overview of Core Goals-Skills, Knowledge, and Values. The thirteen Core goals are divided into three categories and are an integral part of every program of study in the College.

## Background and Overview

*N.B. Compliance items are indicated in bold and matched with the corresponding Fundamental Element (FE); see the Accreditation Readiness Roadmap for specific documents evidencing that compliance.*

**Students may meet the General Education Core by either taking courses or demonstrating competencies across the 13 goals in three categories: academic skills, discipline-related knowledge, and values (12 FE 1 and Figure 12.1).** Academic skills prepare students for academic achievement and fall into the areas of **communication (oral and written), critical analysis, quantitative reasoning, computer fluency, and information literacy.** Discipline knowledge empowers individuals to initiate change, achieve their potential, generate ideas, and serve the common good. Categories of knowledge in which the students demonstrate Core learning include intellectual heritage, aesthetic sensibility and the arts, **physical and life sciences (including scientific reasoning), behavioral and social sciences, and exercise and health science.** The study of values encourages intellectual open-mindedness and enables individuals to engage in society in responsible ways. The values Core competencies include **civic responsibility, sensitivity to global perspectives, and ethical reasoning and behavior (12FE 4 and 6).** A graphic depicting the College's thirteen Core goals appears as Figure 12.1. The online course catalog clearly lists Core goals as well as the courses

### CORE GOAL 11: CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

Demonstrates self-discipline, perseverance, and cooperation in the pursuit of personal success and positive civic engagement.

**Outcomes**

- Demonstrate an ability to work with others to achieve a common goal.
- Demonstrate personal engagement in civic life.
- Analyze the cultural or environmental impact of human society on the non-human world or on future generations to better ensure sustainability.

**Courses Meeting Goal 11**

- ANT 104 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
- BIO 115 Environmental Biology
- COM 100 Mass Media and Society and COM 160 Media Literacy Workshop in combination.
- ECO 117 Introduction to Environmental Economics
- ECO 121 Macroeconomics and ECO 122 Microeconomics in combination.
- GEO 135 Physical Geography
- GEO 235 Sustainable Climate Communities
- HSW 205 Volunteer Administration
- IDS 115 Issues of Race and Ethnicity
- POL 101 Introduction to Political Science
- POL 124 American National Government
- POL 125 American State and Local Government
- POL 202 Civil Liberties (Con Law II)
- PSY 137 Introduction to Organizational Psychology
- PSY 214 Social Psychology
- SPC 120 Public Speaking
- SPC 125 Introduction to Public Relations

Last Updated: 5/31/13

that fulfill those goals (Figure 12.2). In addition, course outline forms are transparent to the student and available by clicking the course's "Learn more" link.

Currently, 188 of the College's 860 courses fulfill at least one Core goal, with most courses designated as Core meeting an average of three goals. A faculty member, with the support of his or her discipline, sponsors a new Core course before the Curriculum Committee. The designation process requires that the faculty sponsor submit an updated course outline form (which illustrates how course outcomes match up with Core outcomes) as well as an approved and updated course assessment plan (which records what student work will be assessed, by what rubric it will be evaluated, and what assessment benchmarks are acceptable). Sample student work is generally required for approval.

*Figure 12.2: Online Catalog Listing of a Courses Meeting Core (Sample). The College's website clearly list courses that meet each Core goal.*

When the Core was implemented in 2011, much care was taken to ensure that the program could meet all thirteen goals within a sixty-credit framework. Each program was required to submit a program map, which designated exactly how each program met the Core goals. If specific courses were not used to meet Core competencies, the program needed to specify how the program as a whole met that competency (a “threaded” competency) and had to specify which student materials would be used to assess it. A sample program map appears as Figure 12.3.

<b>VALUES Section:</b>	
<b>Core Curriculum Goal</b>	<b>Courses in the Program of Study That Meet This Core Curriculum Goal</b>
#11 Civic Responsibility	<p>Social-cultural-ethnic and spirituality is one of the nursing program's human needs vertical strands included across the curriculum. Assignments include cultural assessment; test questions, inclusion of culture and spirituality in data collection for all clients; Utilization of clinical facilities in community which reflect diverse population</p> <p>Civic responsibility is further embedded in the Nursing curriculum as shown in the following examples:  <u>NUR 213</u>: Political action assignment; portfolio development;</p> <p>Demonstration of Societal Sustainability within the Nursing Curriculum include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and use of electronic medical record to decrease paper usage</li> <li>• NUR 212 examinations on-line versus paper/pencil</li> <li>• Posting of student handouts/PowerPoint on Blackboard site decreasing usage and printing</li> <li>• Education of community through Community Day activities as well as 2 hours of Community Service per student each semester</li> <li>• Education within the nursing curriculum regarding use /abuse of supplies that potentially impact on landfills (e.g.: diapers, chux) and the use of products that are biodegradable</li> <li>• Education on the clinical sites in teaching students how to support the clinical affiliations in their sustainability efforts.</li> </ul>

Figure 12.3: Sample Program Map. Program maps identify how Core competencies are met; here, the Nursing program “threads” the civic responsibility competency through a variety of required assignments in the program of study.

By definition, if a student completes a program, he or she simultaneously fulfills the College’s Core requirements. If a student has a choice of Core electives, these are clearly noted in the Program of Study (Figure 12.4).

<b>Second Semester</b>		
ENG 102	English Composition II	3
HIS 101 or 102	History of Western Civilization I or II	3
Elective	Core Goal 8: Physical and Life Sciences	4
Elective	Core Goal 10: Exercise and Health Sciences	2
Elective	Core Goal 7: Aesthetic Sensibility and the Arts	3

Figure 12.4: Programs of Study Show Core Choices. Some programs, such as Liberal Studies, allow students to choose from among many courses to meet Core competencies.

Prior to the first implementation of the Core, the College Assessment Committee developed a set of guidelines for Core assessment and identified the Institutional Portfolio model as the best approach for the assessment of the Core. Using an Institutional Portfolio, the College collects assessment data from selected courses and from other measures of threaded competencies (e.g. data from highly enrolled courses, external accreditation processes, or student success initiatives) and aggregates that data. The Portfolio, therefore, functions as a “snapshot” of general education outcomes across the College. In this way, Core assessment may be integrated with other assessment practices as the College, particularly ongoing Student Success Initiative assessments and various standing discipline-specific assessment practices.



ART*171	Printmaking I (CG2, 7 and 12)			Q3Y	Frank Short/ Patrick Winston		AY13-14		AY15-16	AY16-17		AY18-19
BIO*115	Environmental Biology (CG 2,11,12 and13)	X		Q3Y	Chris Harendza		AY13-14	AY 14-15		AY16-17	AY17-18	
CAO*175	Introduction to Virtual Assistance (CG 13)			Q3Y	Terri Sullivan	AY12-13	AY13-14			AY16-17		
CHI*101	Elementary Chinese I (CG 12)			Q3Y	Erich Lichtscheidl		AY13-14			AY16-17		
CHI*102	Elementary Chinese II (CG12)			Q3Y	Erich Lichtscheidl		AY13-14			AY16-17		
CIS*111	Computer Science I: Programming/Concept (CG 2,4,5 and 13))	X		Q3Y	Anil Datta		AY13-14	AY 14-15		AY16-17	AY17-18	
CIS*205	Ethics & Amer Crim Justice Sys (CG13)			Q3Y	Benn Prybutok		AY13-14			AY16-17		
COM*100	Mass Media and Society (CG11 with COM 160)	X		Q3Y	Neil Goldstein		AY13-14			AY16-17		
COM*160	Media Literacy Workshop CG11 with COM 100)	X		Q3Y	Allan Schear		AY13-14			AY16-17		
COM*200	Ethics, Responsibility, Mass Media and the Law (CG 5 and 13)			Q3Y	Allan Schear		AY13-14	AY 14-15		AY16-17	AY17-18	
ECO*117	Introduction to Environmental Economics (CG9,11,12 and 13)			Q3Y	Lee Bender		AY13-14		AY15-16	AY16-17		AY18-19
ECO*121	Macroeconomics (CG2,5 and 9) (CG11 with ECO 122)		468	Q3Y	Lee Bender		AY13-14	AY 14-15	AY15-16	AY16-17	AY17-18	AY18-19
ECO*122	Microeconomics (CG2,5 and 9) (CG11 with ECO 121)			Q3Y	Lee Bender		AY13-14	AY 14-15	AY15-16	AY16-17	AY17-18	AY18-19
EDU*245	Connecting Families, Schools, and Communities (CG5 and 12)			Q3Y	Debbie Levin/ Meryl Sultanik	AY12-13	AY13-14	AY 14-15		AY16-17	AY17-18	
ENG*255	Women In Literature (CG7 and 12)			Q3Y	Bonnie Finkelstein		AY13-14		AY15-16	AY16-17		AY18-19

Figure 12.5: Sample Core Course Assessment Schedule. The Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment maintains a schedule of Core goals to be assessed

Even though a Portfolio method is used to assess the Core, some Core outcomes were not currently part of an assessment process and needed to undergo pilot assessments to confirm best practices for outcomes evaluation. That being said, as of this writing, Core goals 1 through 10 have been assessed using either the Portfolio or pilot method, with results reported and posted on the assessment SharePoint site. Assessment of goals 11, 12, and 13 is scheduled for AY13-14. (Figure 12.5 shows part of the current schedule of Core assessment.) **In addition, the Curriculum and Assessment Committees plan to review all Core goals and the Core assessment process in AY14-15, for a comprehensive “assessment of the assessment process” (12FE 6).** Figure 12.6 captures a Fall 2014 email from the chair of the Curriculum Committee describing the planned process.

**From:** Harold Halbert <[hhalbert@mc3.edu](mailto:hhalbert@mc3.edu)>  
**Date:** November 11, 2014 at 7:30:21 PM EST  
**To:** FT Faculty <[FTFaculty@mc3.edu](mailto:FTFaculty@mc3.edu)>, SeniorAdjunct <[SeniorAdjunct@mc3.edu](mailto:SeniorAdjunct@mc3.edu)>, PT Academic <[PTAcademic@mc3.edu](mailto:PTAcademic@mc3.edu)>, Adjunct <[Adjunct@mc3.edu](mailto:Adjunct@mc3.edu)>, AdminStaffInstructors <[AdminStaffInstructors@mc3.edu](mailto:AdminStaffInstructors@mc3.edu)>  
**Cc:** Victoria Bastecki-Perez <[vbasteck@mc3.edu](mailto:vbasteck@mc3.edu)>  
**Subject:** Core Review Process Details

To the College Community:

The All-College Curriculum and Academic Affairs Committee and the Assessment Committee will be reviewing the results of our first pilot assessment of the Core Curriculum. The purpose of the review is as follows:

- To see what elements of the Core learning outcomes we have successfully met
- To see what elements of the Core learning outcomes present challenges
- To review the impact of the Core on program designs
- To consider the impact of the Core on Student Success in terms of progression and graduation
- To consider potential refinements to the Core based on the experience of implementing the new requirements.

Given the scope of the Core's impact on the College as a whole, we need your help to make sure that we consider every possible angle as we explore what, if any, refinements to the Core should be made. To that end, both Committees will seek input in the following ways:

- Multiple focus groups among faculty, students, and administrators
- The reactivation of the Core Blackboard site (available to Blackboard users in the list of courses available under the title "MCCC\_CoreReview\_2014: 2014 Core Review")
- Open Discussions of specific Core Goals hosted by Deb Dalrymple
- A general faculty meeting devoted to discussing the Core in February 2015
- A poll about potential options in April of 2015
- Direct emails to your Curriculum Committee representatives and the Chair ([hhalbert@mc3.edu](mailto:hhalbert@mc3.edu))
- Direct emails to Assessment Committee members and the Chair ([ddalrymp@mc3.edu](mailto:ddalrymp@mc3.edu))

Our timeline is flexible, but the earliest any changes could possibly be instituted would be Fall of 2016. The goal is to refine rather than to reinvent the Core, and we want to take our time and get this right so that all who have a stake can share their views.

As a starting point, the Assessment Committee has written a report based on the pilot assessment data collected up to this point that suggests some potential refinements to the wording of the Core descriptions and potential consolidation of some of the Core areas. That should be considered starting points for a long discussion that we believe will help build consensus about the direction our Core should go. The report is available in the "Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes" section of the "Other" menu of the "Department/Organization/Other" tabs located under your calendar in the MC3 portal.

We look forward to hearing from all of you.

--Hal Halbert, Chair, All-College Curriculum and Academic Affairs Committee  
 --Deb Dalrymple, Chair, Assessment Committee

Figure 12.6 Planned Core Assessment. The Curriculum and Assessment Committees plan to review the Core in AY14-15.

The College is currently experimenting with an easy-to-read “how are our students doing” pages that report Core Assessment results on the external College website (Figure 12.7). These graphic summaries present the public with the Core outcomes themselves, the number of students meeting Core outcomes, the assessment methods used, and a brief overview of the analysis and future action reported to “close the loop.” In addition, selected Core assessment results are reported in the **IEM** itself, with several outcomes aligned with CCSSE benchmarks. More robust reporting of Core assessment is in development and will be posted on the internal SharePoint site for Core assessment. **Finally, each program is currently documenting how Core outcomes are applied program outcomes; that process will be completed in AY14-15 as part of the curriculum mapping initiative (12FE 2). Appendix 12.2 contains a sample program summary (from the Surgical Technology Program) that shows the relationship between a program curriculum and the Core.**

**Results of Core assessment influence many decisions at the College (12FE 6),** from the addition of more training for adjunct faculty (ENG 102), the creation of open source materials around critical thinking skills (ENG 101). Figure 12.8 shows an excerpt from a “closing the loop” spreadsheet maintained in the English department. The Assessment of Goal 8, Physical and Life Sciences, led to new placement requirements in BIO 131. Evaluation of detailed assessment reports from the ECO121/122 sequence led to changes to the curricula and the inclusion of that sequence in the Core.

**Appendix 12.1 contains a complete report on the Assessment of the College’s Core and includes representative data.**

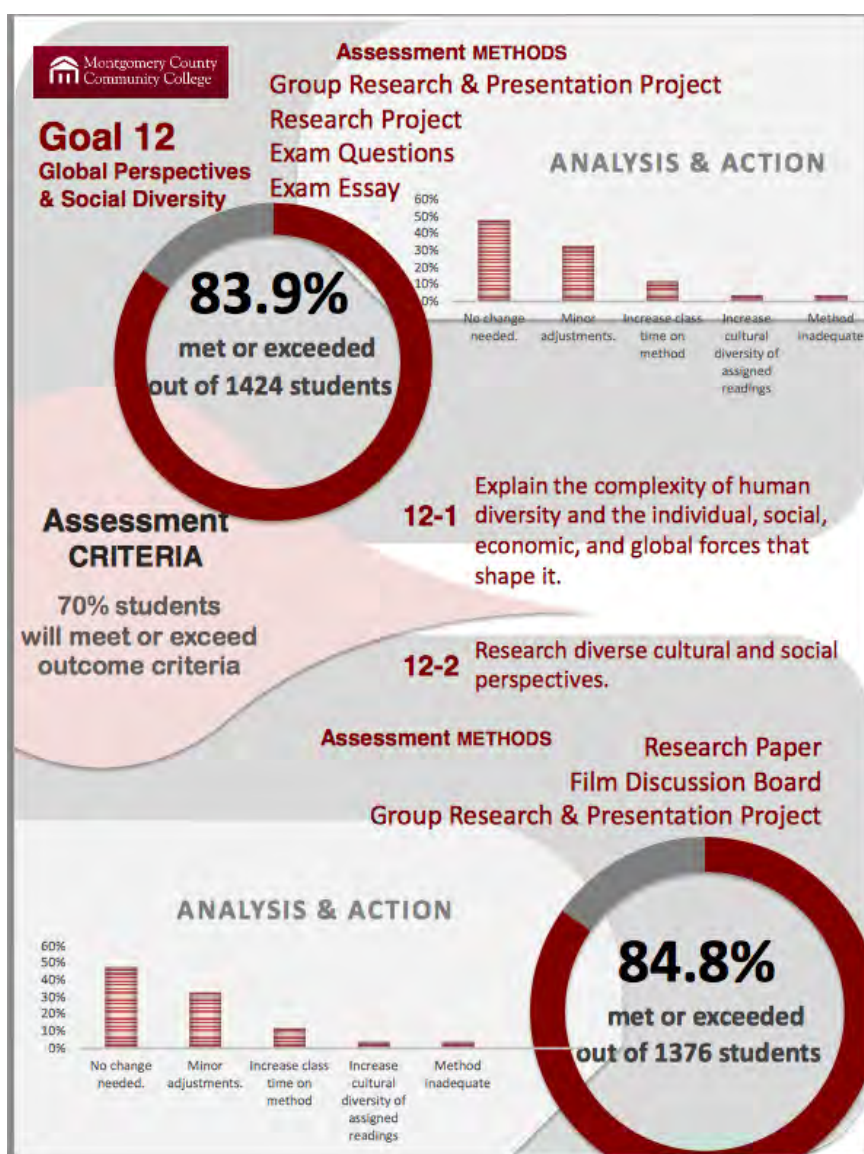


Figure 12.7: Easy-to-Read “How Our Students Are Doing” Webpage. External pages show assessment results to interested students.



Type of Student Work	Method	Results	Findings	Recommendations	Use of Results
Final essay from English 101	Randomly selected student essays from more than 50 sections were scored against a rubric by a panel of three faculty readers	See 2011 letter to faculty and linked spreadsheet with data and results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student scores were highest in those areas in which the College has a strong developmental curriculum in place, particularly in the areas of punctuation and grammar.</li> <li>2. Students scored lower than hoped for in the following areas:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) development of a thesis statement, b) employment of critical thinking skills, and c) Integration of academic secondary sources.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Some instructors assigned informative report-style essays instead of persuasive or argumentative essays.</li> </ol>	<p>English 101 faculty should review their syllabi and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Design writing assignments to stress college-level critical thinking.</li> <li>2. Ensure that students understand what it means to support an arguable claim in a written assignment.</li> <li>3. Assign rigorous persuasive writing, rather than informative report-style essays.</li> <li>4. Review how to integrate secondary sources appropriately into a written discussion.</li> <li>5. Include basic information literacy instruction in English 101, as evidenced by student papers that use and cite at least one secondary source appropriately, according to either MLA, APA, some other standardized format for documenting sources.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The English department organized “best practices” workshops for English 101 instructors during Fall 2011.</li> <li>2. The English department circulated assessment rubrics used to score student work to all instructors for ongoing use and reference.</li> <li>3. The English department re-circulated the English 101 Act 335 form, which contains student learning outcomes, for inclusion on all syllabi.</li> <li>4. The Freshman committee created sample assignments which emphasized critical thinking and circulated those to all English 101 instructors.</li> <li>5. The method of communicating assessment results was changed from a formal report to a faculty email letter, circulated prior to the beginning of every Spring term, to better ensure that all are reading and understanding the findings.</li> </ol>

Figure 12.8: Sample “Closing the Loop” Spreadsheet. The English Department maintains a spreadsheet of “closing the loop” activities associated with each Core assessment cycle.

Finally, reports on the entire Core and on various Core categories are regularly compiled and distributed at the College. Recently, for example, an Assessment lunch for 35 faculty members was held to review the assessment around Goals 11, 12, and 13, the Values Goals. A Values Resource Book (Appendix 12.3), developed by the Assessment Committee, was shared with those present. Included were references and links to other resources, sample rubrics, ideas for topics, and articles requested by faculty as part of their assessment. After a lunch, the group discussed the design of various assessments, practical insights gleaned from assessment and ways to refine assessment outcomes.

## Self-Study Methodology

During the Self-Study, Working Group 8 researched how the College’s new General Education Core curriculum is being implemented, how it aligns with the College’s mission and strategic goals, and how it has been communicated across the College. Working Group 8 investigated how the Core has affected the transferability of programs, as well as student registration, persistence and success. It also looked at whether a clear process for faculty for establishing Core courses and appealing a Core course decision exists at the College. Finally, Working Group 8 examined how and when the General Education Core is assessed.

## Findings and Discussion

### Strengths

**Working Group 8 found that implementation of the new Core has been communicated clearly to the College, albeit after some initial difficulties.** The 13 competency-based goals of the new Core were presented at multiple general faculty meetings, discussed by first, the Core Steering Committee, then the All-College Curriculum Committee, and approved by the Board of Trustees. The large number of Core goals was initially an impediment to its implementation, but after some feedback, a better strategy for teaching students and advisors about the Core was developed and an internal “marketing” plan was created. Communication with students about the new Core has primarily taken place through a series of activities, a short video and multiple publications. An illustration of one of these activities was the “Core Day Celebration” in which T-shirts were distributed on campus. Advisors and counselors began to talk to students about the new Core as early as 2010 and to date have done a good job in helping students understand new Core requirements. And since the Core was integrated into students’ programs of study when it was implemented, all students just need to complete their programs to meet the new Core.

**Faculty and administration have worked together to establish a manageable Core course approval process. In addition, the flexibility to adjust the approval process has been helpful.** Although Working Group 8 noted that, initially, the Core approval process was plagued by multiple revisions to required forms and a cumbersome approval cycle, recent improvements and better oversight by the Curriculum Committee have worked to streamline the process. The Curriculum Committee Pathways web site was developed to streamline the process and simplify the paperwork including extensive examples of completed applications for every curricular scenario. As well, the Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment established “Core Boot Camps” to train sponsoring faculty in designation requirements and to expedite the approval of courses for Core. A web page was developed to provide a list of core courses that meet each goal. While the process for adding and amending Core courses continues to be refined, the results of an informal survey of program coordinators by the Working Group on the course approval process determined that most dissatisfaction of the process occurred from faculty who had not submitted a course since 2010.

### Opportunities

**As the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has implemented its Statewide Program-to-Program Articulation Agreement Process, known locally as Transfer and Articulation of Credit or TAOC, discussions about the compatibility of TAOC and Core requirements have emerged.** This new legislation allows community college students to transfer completed Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees into parallel bachelor degree programs with junior standing at all colleges and universities that participate in the Commonwealth's Statewide College Credit Transfer System. To participate in TAOC, multiple existing degree programs at the College needed to be reviewed and adjusted. In some cases, programs recently redesigned to allow students flexibility in choosing Core courses and meeting General Education competencies, were reviewed and changed again in response to TAOC. Often TAOC requirements resulted in the limitation of a student’s choice of program or Core electives. Understanding the effects of TAOC on Core is limited at this point, as both the TAOC

agreements and the Core are relatively new. Going forward, the College should gauge the impact of both the General Education Core and state transfer requirements on program and course registration, student persistence, transferability, and student success and make revisions, as needed. (A longer discussion of TAOC is found in the chapter on Standard 11.) And while in the PASSHE system there has been much growth in the area of transferability of general education courses, among the private partners there has been a reversal in some core-to-core agreements with smaller, liberal arts colleges. These colleges have a renewed investment in their own General Education curriculum and want to ensure that students are meeting their particular standards (which, in some cases, can be upwards of 60 credits). On the other hand, because our common Core curriculum also encompasses AAS degrees, a number of partner schools are re-considering the inclusion of these AAS programs into their articulation agreements, because students in these programs now meet that Core as well. **Working Group 8 suggests, therefore, that the College continue to gauge the impact of both the General Education Core and State transfer requirements on program and course registration, student persistence, transferability, and student success and make revisions, as needed (Suggestion 12.a).**

In addition, the process of performing Core assessment has highlighted the need for ongoing revisions to the Core, particularly to the language of the Core goals and the methodology for evaluating Core outcomes. For example, there is general dissatisfaction among the faculty with the language of some Core outcomes, particularly with the phrasing of Goals 3 (Quantitative Reasoning), 7 (Aesthetic Sensibility and the Arts), and 8 (Physical and Life Sciences). Revisions to the language of the outcomes could clarify assessment efforts. Assessment also reveals that some goals may be redundant; for example, Goal 2, (Analytic Skills), could probably be assessed as part of Goal 3 (Quantitative Reasoning) and Goal 8 (Physical and Life Sciences, with an emphasis on the scientific method). Faculty members are generally dissatisfied with the general nature of the rubrics used for Core goal evaluation. Some rubrics do not reflect specific assessment criteria used by the individual faculty members. **The Group suggests that the Curriculum Committee review each Core goal to clarify language, assist Core assessment, and evaluate the efficacy of the entire Core, making revisions, as needed, based on outcomes data, program needs, and faculty feedback (Suggestion 12.b).**

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

**12.a. The College should gauge the impact of both the General Education Core and State transfer requirements on program and course registration, student persistence, transferability, and student success and make revisions, as needed.**

(Theme 1: Student Success and Academic Excellence Supported by Data-Driven Assessment)

**12.b. The Curriculum Committee should review each Core goal to clarify language, assist Core assessment, and evaluate the efficacy of the entire Core, making revisions, as needed, based on outcomes data, program needs, and faculty feedback.**

(Theme 1: Student Success and Academic Excellence Supported by Data-Driven Assessment)





# Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

## Standard 13: Related Educational Activities



### Lifelong Learning: The Virtual Campus and University Center

Two initiatives highlight the way in which the College has used its resources to extend its geographical reach and support the County's needs for lifelong

learning. After years of planning, in 2012-2013 the College began its **Virtual Campus Initiative** to expand and improve its well-established online presence (Figure 13.1). The Virtual Campus emphasizes enhanced enrollment, financial aid, and additional support services for online students. Five certificate programs are now offered through the Virtual Campus, with additional degree programs, such as the A.A. in Liberal Studies and the A.S. in Business Administration and Criminal Justice, offered beginning AY 14-15.

The Virtual Campus Initiative has continued the College's rigorous focus on the quality of its online courses. The All-College Distance Education Committee has developed multiple processes for ensuring online excellence, including the standardization of students' online experience through a common Blackboard "shell" and the assessment of online courses using a rubric of best practices. Starting in Fall 2014, all online instructors were directed to map instructional activities to credit hours (via the **DERCA**, which was discussed on page 11-3). Other hallmarks of online excellence include:

- **The online course "refresh process."** This process includes an instructor-driven course assessment process to review how courses meet best practices and list out course activities that meet required contact hours (Figure 13.2).

### Explore, Experience, Engage



Figure 13.1: Virtual Campus Initiative. The Virtual Campus Initiative expands and improves the College's online presence.

V. Student-Instructor Interaction	
A. Course is designed to provide and instructor facilitates a variety of activities that offer opportunities for meaningful student- instructor interaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide instructor availability and detailed contact information.</li> <li>• Post your own introduction in a forum and require students to introduce themselves in that same forum.</li> <li>• Clearly state response times and policy for answering emails.</li> <li>• Clearly state policy and practice for returning grades and feedback on assignments, tests, discussion posts, projects and other assessments.</li> <li>• Provide timely feedback on activities that require student-instructor interaction.</li> <li>• Provide surveys or other mechanism that allow students to offer constructive suggestions to the instructor.</li> <li>• Provide assignments, tests, discussion posts, projects and other assessments that allow instructor-student interaction and timely feedback to students.</li> <li>• Clearly state MCCC Grading Policy.</li> <li>• Provide self-assessments such as ungraded quizzes, skill-checks and so on that allow students to determine progress in mastering course content.</li> </ul>
VI. Student-Student Interaction	
A. Course is designed to provide and instructor facilitates a variety of activities that offer opportunities for meaningful student- student interaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for peer collaboration in selected course activities, including discussion forums, team or group projects and other activities.</li> <li>• Provide an introductory forum where students have opportunities to meet and converse with classmates.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities through guided activities that enable students to communicate with each other through course email, forums or live chats.</li> </ul>

Figure 13.2: Refreshing Online Courses. Online instructors complete various course assessments during "refresh" process for Virtual Campus offerings.

- **Updated certification of online faculty.** A required course for online instructors, e-Learning 101, recently updated and revised, is designed to help faculty engage in online pedagogy. The eight-week online course is offered three times per calendar year. The final step in this certification course is for faculty to complete the Blackboard Training Completion Rubric with a member of the Instructional Technology Support team to ensure online proficiency.
- **Ongoing and additional faculty training in online teaching.** The College is expanding faculty development opportunities in online pedagogy. For example, the faculty section of the training booklet “Transforming your Talents” (handed out on opening day) contains a list of professional development courses geared to faculty (topics are geared toward technology, pedagogy, assessment and other professional development opportunities). Technology Tune Ups are brief training oriented to keeping faculty up-to-date with the latest educational technology.

As well, the College’s **University Center** sustains the academic rigor and educational effectiveness of its two-year degrees (Figure 13.3). The University Center offers College graduates and the greater community the opportunity to transfer seamlessly in to multiple bachelor’s degree programs, three master’s degree programs, and two doctoral degree programs. The Center hosts programs from Albright College, Alvernia University, Chestnut Hill College, Drexel University, Immaculata University, Temple University and Villanova University and operates primarily at the West Campus, with some classes and degrees also available on the Central Campus. On the West Campus, the newly renovated 10,500 square-foot facility houses six classrooms — each with smart and videoconference technology — and a spacious student lounge. The University Center has extended completion opportunities to populations not otherwise served by the College and remains a growing source of interest and excitement for students.



Figure 13.3: University Center Partners. The University Center offers College graduates and the community the opportunity to transfer into bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral programs at both West and Central Campuses.

## Background and Overview

*N.B. Compliance items are indicated in bold and matched with the corresponding Fundamental Element (FE); see the Accreditation Readiness Roadmap for specific documents evidencing that compliance and refers readers to the Document Roadmap for specific links to evidence supporting each of the standard's 36 individual fundamental elements. Selected items are highlighted for discussion in this chapter.*

The College offers a range of developmental non-credit offerings in support of academic readiness (as discussed in Chapter 8) as well as a range of non-credit offerings in accordance with its mission to reach lifelong learners in its community (13FE 1a-c and 4a-d and Figure 13.4). As noted in the chapter on Standard 5, non-credit offerings of the Center for Workforce Development have been re-aligned and now sit in each area's academic discipline, coordinated by the discipline Dean. This realignment allows the College to serve more employees, to ensure that the training provided meets the needs of the participating employers, and to ensure high academic rigor in the non-credit offerings. A partial list of non-credit, "career" certificate programs offered by the College appears as Figure 13.5; a full list of all career, credit-bearing, and specialty certificates appears in the College catalog. **In addition, other life-long learning courses traditionally offered as non-credit courses (ceramics, cooking, etc.) are now scheduled, staffed, and assessed through their academic division processes (13FE 1a-c and 4a-d).**

The College's arrangements with educational contractors adhere to the requirements for Contractual Relationships or Affiliated Providers and apply only to non-credit offerings (13FE 7a-c). For these non-credit courses, the College maintains partnerships with companies that provide curricula (approved by program faculty), online educational resources, and discounted software and other services. For computing and business credentials, only Microsoft is a contracted relationship. Previous to the termination of its contract on June 30, 2013, another contractor, Ed To Go, provided some on-line non-credit courses. The College is working to consolidate all e-learning under the Virtual Campus umbrella, at the recommendation of the All-College Distance Education Committee.



Figure 13.4: Non-Credit Offerings. The College offers many non-credit courses to meet industry and community needs. Above is a list of computer science certifications offered.

Non-Credit, "Career" Certificate Offering	Does College Award a Certificate of Completion?	High Priority Occupation 12/13	Preparation for Industry Certification
CCNA	Yes	Yes	Yes
CITRIX	No (Certificate from Citrix)	Yes	Yes
Health Information Technologist	Yes	Yes	Yes
Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator	Yes	Yes	Yes
A+: PC Hardware & Software	Yes	Yes	Yes
AutoCAD 2012	Yes	No	No
Medical Billing & Coding Certificate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Physical Therapy Aide	Yes	Yes	No
Pharmacy Technician	Yes	Yes	Yes
Personal Trainer Certificate Program	Yes	No	Yes
Nurse Refresher/Reactivation Program	Yes	Yes	Yes
Notary Public	Yes	No	Yes
ServSafe	No (Certificate from County Health Dept.)	Yes	Yes
Industrial Machinery Mechanic	Yes	Yes	Yes
CNC Machine Operator	Yes	Yes	Yes
Warehouse and Logistics Technician	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipal Police Basic Training Curriculum	Yes	Yes	Yes
Paramedic	Yes	Yes	Yes
Emergency Medical Technician	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dental Anesthesia	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Figure 13.5: Certificate Programs Meet Workforce Needs. The College offers certificate programs to meet workforce needs in high-priority occupations and in-demand industries.*

As detailed in the chapter on Standard 8, the College awards credit for prior learning, including experiential learning, as part of its general Transfer of Credit policy and processes. Prior learning includes courses taken at other regionally accredited institutions, nationally recognized examinations such as Advanced Placement [AP], College Level Examination Program [CLEP], portfolio assessment and challenge exams, and articulation of credits based on professional certification and training. Along with the other 14 community colleges in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, MCCC is cooperating with AcademyOne, a consulting and software development firm, that has been awarded a contract to create and implement a



statewide Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) website and assessment/e-portfolio system. The fully automated system helps the College determine if a student is eligible for prior learning credit and assists the College with determining the best way to award that credit. **The Working Group affirms that these processes comply with the fundamental elements under Experiential Learning (13FE 3a-f).**

While only 31 percent of start-up businesses survive after seven years, the percentage increases to 87 percent for those start-ups that go through an incubation process, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration. To assist those starting businesses in the County, the College operates a **Center for Entrepreneurial Studies (CES)**, the central feature of which is a “business incubator.” The business incubator consists of 10 state-of-the-art offices available for leasing at a nominal monthly fee. The reasonable rent allows entrepreneurs to use their existing funds to grow, and the CES supports local entrepreneurs with an array of onsite resources, including workshops, counseling, seminars and mentoring. Mentors from the CES Advisory Committee and the College’s faculty, as well as members of the non-profit business counseling agency, SCORE, and the Small Business Administration, also contribute advice. To help educate and train new entrepreneurs, the College launched an Entrepreneurial Certificate Program in 2010. This certificate program consists of four three-credit courses especially designed to address all facets of starting and operating a viable business. The College also offers an array of non-credit entrepreneurial courses in conjunction with the Workforce Development and Continuing Education division to address each stage of business growth. These courses include “Marketing Your Own Business,” “Business Development Strategies,” “Introduction to Green Entrepreneurship,” “Launch Your Small Business Using Online Technology Tools,” “QuickBooks,” “How to Open an Internet Store,” and “Creating Your Own Website.” Finally, the College offers a Woman-Owned Business Certificate Program and related courses specifically designed for women entrepreneurs to learn and develop the skills they need to succeed. This combination of academic certification, business targeted courses, mentoring, workshops and business incubation is unique in Montgomery County. The CES plays an active role in the economic development of the County.

### Self-Study Methodology

During the Self-Study, Working Group 9 investigated what the College is doing to further students’ academic goals through its non-credit offerings across multiple divisions. In particular, Working Group 9 examined the processes for ensuring that the College’s non-credit offerings, such as certificate and Workforce Development programs, are in compliance with industry and other standards, as well as whether these offerings meet community needs. In addition, the Group researched whether student services and resources are aligned among the College’s physical and virtual campuses, and how the College affirms that students across all modes and sites have access to educational offerings and support services. Finally, since the College functions as a center for performing and fine arts within the county, Working Group 9 examined the impact of Cultural Affairs and other public and scholarly programs on student and community engagement.

## Findings and Discussion

### Strengths

Working Group 9 found that the College's ongoing commitment to developmental education remains one of its strengths. The evidence demonstrating how non-credit courses ready students for academic success appears in the discussion of the Leah Meyer Austin Award (Standard 8 and Appendix 8.2) and **affirms the College's compliance with fundamental elements surrounding Basic Skills (13FE 1a-c)**. The College's **Student Success Inventory** (2007-2013), an excerpt of which appears as Figure 13.6 below, also demonstrates ongoing assessment and improvement of developmental education at the College.

Intervention or Strategy	Start Date	Description	Type
Arithmetic Refresher Course	Fall 2007	MAT 010B is a one-credit arithmetic refresher course offered as an option prior to each semester for the student who achieves a designated Accuplacer score and who would have been required to complete two three-credit developmental courses, and feels that they only need to refresh forgotten concepts. Upon successful completion, students move directly into the next level developmental math course, beginning algebra.	Acceleration
Beginning Algebra with Arithmetic Review	Fall 2007	MAT 011B is a four-credit beginning algebra that includes a review of algebra. Students, who place in the high range of arithmetic on Accuplacer, now place into this class, instead of going through the two-course arithmetic/beginning algebra path. This sequence accelerates their progress in developmental math.	Acceleration
<i>Link 2 Success</i>	2010	The <i>Link 2 Success</i> program is required for students who test or re-test below minimal placement scores for all of the lowest level developmental courses. The College works with a community partner, the YWCA Tri-County Area Adult Literacy Program, to provide an Adult Basic Education (ABE) in order to help students build a basic level of competency.	Accurate Placement
Concepts of Numbers - Math 010	Fall 2008	This course redesign was created using a conceptual approach versus the traditional path of teaching arithmetic through topics, for example, whole numbers, fractions, decimals, pre-algebra. The core of the course progresses through basic concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. All of the objectives of a traditional arithmetic course are covered, but they are taught in a different sequence. The course also includes a History of Math unit.	Course Re-design
Expansion of Institutional Research Support	Fall 2006	The initial Heinz Endowment grant for Achieving the Dream (AtD) was used in part to fund two part-time research analysts to support the work of the Student Success Initiative and meet AtD reporting requirements.	Culture of Evidence
Performance Point Dashboard	Spring 2011	The IR and IT staff collaborated to develop dashboards for the student success measures using PerformancePoint. This project included expanding the data to allow for measuring student progression patterns for each cohort. The interactive dashboards provide data on course retention and success rates, ability to disaggregate the data, student progression and college-level success rates for students who completed developmental education courses in English and math.	Culture of Evidence

Intervention or Strategy	Start Date	Description	Type
Assessment and Redesign of the Developmental Studies Lab (DSL)	2009	The Developmental Studies Lab (DSL) offered a self-paced, computer software supported instruction alternative for the traditional face-to-face developmental courses. Through evaluation of the success rates of DSL students compared to other developmental students, it was found that this model was not working to improve student success. It was determined to eliminate the course-based DSL model and use it as supplemental support for the standard developmental education courses.	Student Support
Supplemental Instruction/ Course Learning Assistance	Fall 2008	Supplemental Instruction (SI) was initially started as part of the Learning Communities for developmental education students. From there SI targeted developmental math sections and it was determined that it would be more effective for gateway courses, while other strategies were piloted in developmental math. Implemented in several gateway courses, including Accounting Principles I, Intermediate Algebra, Statistics, etc.	Student Support

Figure 13.6: Developmental Education Strategies. An excerpt from the Student Success Inventory from 2007-20013, listing developmental education strategies that have been redesigned as a result of assessment data.

**When affirming compliance with the fundamental elements on additional sites (13FE5a-d), the Working Group found that, since the 2005 Self-Study, the College has extended its geographical reach in order to meet the needs of a diverse County in a responsible way.** In addition to its two campuses in Blue Bell and Pottstown, the College operates the Montgomery County Public Training Program in Conshohocken and the Transportation Security Administration at the Philadelphia Airport. **The addition of a 15,000 square foot Culinary Arts Institute (CAI), which emphasizes hands-on, lab-based learning in a professional kitchen setting, has become a new strength of the College.** The Institute, located in Towamencin, has the capacity to enroll up to 350 students over the next five years, meeting the demand that the National Restaurant Association anticipates of 28,200 new culinary jobs in Pennsylvania. **The Institute will also support a variety of non-credit courses for the culinary enthusiast and professional development (13FE5a-d). A full range of support services, including library, advising, and tutoring, are offered to students at the CAI; moreover, shuttle service to and from the Central and West campuses is being planned.** Finally, the College offers classes at 29 instructional sites throughout the County.

**The Working Group affirmed the College’s revised certificate programs as a strength (13FE 2a-e); these now allow students to earn a certificate and then apply some or all of that credit towards a degree program.** While in the past, students earning certificate would not necessarily have a direct curricular pathway to a two-year degree, now credit earned from these certificates easily “stacks” into an established two-year degree program, should the student want to continue. For example, the new Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing Certificate of Completion for 16 credits stacks to the Biotechnology AAS degree program, as the certificate comprises four courses currently required as part of that program. In terms of non-credit offerings, a completed industry certification stacks into an existing degree program, but not a particular course in the certification. As part of the certificate training, students are prepared to take the appropriate industry exam. They can then utilize that industry certification as prior learning credit towards specific credit courses. For example, non-credit Medical Billing and Coding students that have obtained the Certified Medical Coder industry certification will receive 9 credits as prior learning credit toward the Health Services Management AAS. Currently, certificate programs are available for students in the areas of accounting, computer information systems, computer networking, game design, hotel and restaurant management, marketing/management, office administration, public relations, real estate, software engineering, and web development.



Figure 13.7: The Lively Arts Series at MCCC. Cultural Affairs supports all six strategic goals related to the College’s mission.

Finally, and uniquely to MCCC, the Working Group affirmed the importance of the College’s Cultural Affairs office to its mission (Figures 13.7 and 13.8). The College promotes diversity through its programmatic offerings reflecting the rich mix of cultures that now enrich our county. It also promotes lifelong learning among a variety of age groups. Finally, many of the College’s Cultural Affairs offerings provide an opportunity for academic program collaboration and community service, in keeping with the College’s mission and six strategic goals. (Figure 13.7 provides sample collaborative academic and community outreach stemming from the Cultural Affairs office.)

Strategic Goal	Cultural Affairs Academic and Collaborative Events	Cultural Affairs Integrated Community Outreach/Service
<b>Increase Student Access and Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Young Arts Explorers Program – Collaborate with Admissions to conduct Campus Tours for Students in conjunction with performances</li> <li>■ The College’s SSRT has collaborated for several years with the Montgomery County Teen Parent Task Force to host the annual Straight Talk program on a variety of topics including: Understanding the Teen Brain; Understanding Moods in Today’s Youth, and Human Trafficking – How It Can Affect Your Child and You?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Eisenhower Middle School Technical Production Program: One avenue that increases the reach of the College into underserved markets and deepens overall enrollment penetration rates</li> </ul>

Strategic Goal	Cultural Affairs Academic and Collaborative Events	Cultural Affairs Integrated Community Outreach/Service
Build curricular relevance, innovation in delivery and supportive faculty development systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Collaboration between Theatre Arts program and the Arts and Humanities to offer an annual presentation of <i>A Christmas Carol</i>.</li> <li>■ Lively Arts production Internship Program is a partnership program between Lively Arts, the Theatre Program, the Communications Program and the IT department that offers students professional training in Backstage Operations.</li> <li>■ Lively Arts Usher Program: Continue to collaborate with International Student Program)on recruitment and training of ushers.</li> <li>■ Actors from the London Stage, a series of workshops with visiting artists from The Actors from the London Stage, comprising 52 contact hours between the artists and students, culminating in a production of <i>King Lear</i> attended by 121 students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensemble Español and Lula Washington Dance Ensemble were residency programs that focused on the Latino and African-American communities in Norristown and Pottstown.</li> <li>■ Ongoing academic and extracurricular cooperation to builds unique workshop experiences in production and performance such as the Dance Ensemble, the Jazz band, Drama Club, West End Student Theatre and the Communicating Arts Production Workshop. These offer academic credit and success towards degrees for students in these fields, while supporting leadership skills and fostering community engagement and team building.</li> </ul>
Develop an engaged community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>A Christmas Carol</i>, offered each year to the community in the Black Box Theatre and the South Hall Community Room of the Pottstown Campus, welcomes families on both campuses to encounter this holiday tale.</li> <li>■ The Bennett Lectureship series seeks to serve students and the community by presenting some of the most influential and committed figures in the areas of social justice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ongoing collaboration with community partner Theatre Horizon and Theatre Arts program to produce theatre works for the community ('hidden rivers, the Courage to Change,' 'Pretty Fire,' 'Zora!')</li> </ul>
Create a sense of place to support learning.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ West End Student Theatre with the Theatre Production Workshop and our community partner Theatre Horizon in Norristown have built both the South Hall Community Room and the open-air amphitheater in Schuylkill River Park into arts destinations and grown the student engagement for West Campus.</li> </ul>
Adopt an entrepreneurial approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Revenues from events produced by THA students have generated in excess of \$17,000 since 2010.</li> <li>■ The Lively Arts series recently secured significant grants funding from leading area foundations such as the William Penn Foundation.</li> </ul>	
Create a high-performance culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Office of Cultural Affairs has brought nationally and internationally recognized artists to present at the College through the Lively Arts series. Recent events include a one-man show by playwright and actor Steven Lang, performances by Ballet Hispanico and jazz saxophonist Pharoah Sanders, and the Bennet Lecture for Peace and Social Justice, featuring sociologist Todd Gitlin.</li> </ul>	

Figure 13.8: Cultural Affairs Outreach Mapped to Strategic Goals. Academic and community outreach led by Cultural Affairs helps achieve the College's strategic goals and mission.



## Opportunities

**The Working Group noted an opportunity for better parity and student services and resources across campuses and locations.** Some specific opportunities noted by the Working Group are listed below:

- **Convert remaining paper-based academic procedures to online processes.** It is challenging for Virtual and West Campus students to find personnel for signatures or other verifications required to complete the processes. Examples include course and registration forms such as incomplete grades, audits, fourth attempt waivers, approvals for bypassing prerequisites withdrawals, and grade changes.
- **Extend online advising and counseling services.** Use available technology to provide greater depth of advising and counseling availability. Currently these services are available four hours per day and through the Virtual Campus Professional Resources Specialist, but they need to be more widely available across campuses.
- **Create a student life experience for online students.** Suggestions have included virtual social spaces, online student organizations, streaming campus activities.
- **Ensure equity in face-to-face and virtual proctoring.** Faculty should have a choice of testing and proctoring services no matter what the course delivery modality (online, hybrid, face-to-face).

In terms of parity in services and resource across bricks and mortar locations, the Working Group found that the College should:

- **Address lab resource issues across campuses.** CAI students must still come to Central or West for the required four-credit lab. In the interim, shuttle service from CAI to the Central campus began in Fall 2014.
- **Address videoconferencing and technology disparities.** Persistent problems with videoconferencing and other technology shortages at West sometimes affect communication.

Putting in place a plan to improve these issues will help the College ensure parity across all campuses.

**Finally, given the centrality the Cultural Affairs office to the mission of the College, the College should work to spread awareness of these and other resources that it offers to County residents.** The College has demonstrated a significant impact in the areas of public programs and community engagement as evidenced by the tens of thousands of patrons, individuals and organizations that take advantage of Cultural Affairs/Lively Arts Series events and lectures, the Performing Arts productions in theatre, dance and music, as well as athletic events, health fairs and services, and communications, film, and radio programs for Montgomery County residents. The College has become a focal point for community building and engagement and remains an important resource to community groups, businesses and agencies in

Montgomery County. Many groups and agencies rent or are donated facilities for a wide variety of meetings, graduations, performances, and social events. Yet, surveys of the County reveal a relative low level of awareness by County residents of these resources. The Working Group suggests that the College should find additional platforms to raise County and community awareness of its range of facilities and its breadth of cultural offerings.

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

**13.a The College should strive to ensure parity in advising, technology, student life, student services and course offerings across campuses.**

(Theme 4: College Values)

**13.b The College should find additional platforms to raise County and community awareness of its range of facilities and its breadth of cultural offerings.**

(Theme 2: Collaboration and Communication).



# Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

## Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning



### How Are Our Students Doing? Sharing the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

A leader among its regional peers, MCCC has long modeled best practices surrounding the assessment of student learning. On April 11, 2013, the College, a founding member of the Eastern PA Regional Two-Year College Assessment Consortium, again hosted the Consortium's Annual Assessment Summit, attended by approximately 100 faculty, administrators and staff from Harrisburg, Lehigh-Carbon, Northampton, Bucks Luzerne, Delaware County, and Harcum Colleges. During the summit, attendees engaged in dialogue about ways to engage with their college communities through transparency and enhanced communication about assessment. Some "takeaways" from the Assessment Summit follow:

- Knowledge management is important to assessment, and institutions should avoid concentrating assessment expertise into too few hands.
- Institutional communication of the assessment structure is vital.
- All participants must continue to design assessment activities that are sustainable and scalable.

In May, in a follow-up to the Assessment Summit, the Center for Teaching and Learning sponsored a Faculty Development program that implemented these takeaways and focused on communicating and sharing SLOs. Then faculty posters were completed and shared at the January 2014 Assessment Celebration and at the May 2014. The work of faculty members to assess student learning was at the heart of the program agenda and a poster session showcased and communicated selected faculty work around course assessment (Figure 14.1). Faculty presented assessment work aimed at improving student learning across the curriculum, and included titles such as "Mastering Chemistry in CHE 121," "Improving Student Engagement in History Courses," "Obtaining Clearances with Ease [in Education Courses]," and "Earning Badges in Blackboard" and "Blackboard Analytics." A PowerPoint summary of the poster sessions appears as Appendix 14.1

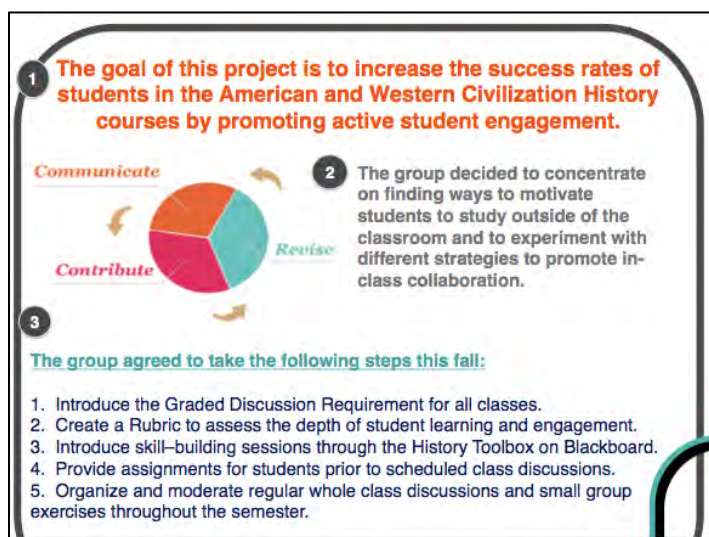


Figure 14.1: Poster Sessions Communicate SLO assessment. Posters communicate "closing the loop" steps aimed at increasing student success in introductory history courses.

As the Assessment Committee and the Assessment team continue to review the data about SLO assessment, they needed to have a meaningful way to "close the loop" with the College

community. In Fall 2014, therefore, an ongoing series of assessment lunches were held to discuss SLOs associated with the General Education Core. During one lunch meeting, 35 faculty and administrators reviewed both assessment results from courses associated with Goals 11, 12, and 13 (handily communicated as laminated “placements” for participants) as well as materials from a Resource Book (Appendix 12.3) containing sample rubrics, ideas for future assessments, and articles requested by faculty as part of their assessment. After a lunch, the group discussed of which assessments faculty members were most proud, which assessment processes most helped students and programs, and what practical insights were gained from assessment. Responses included conversations around improved success rates, engaging students in order to help them make connections, better understanding of where to focus a course, improved consistency across courses, and improved clarity regarding course expectations.

### Background and Overview

*N.B. Compliance items are indicated in bold and matched with the corresponding Fundamental Element (FE); see the Accreditation Readiness Roadmap for specific documents evidencing that compliance.*

As Figure 14.2 (a diagram of the College’s internal overview of the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes) illustrates, **the College measures student learning in multiple ways**. Faculty and staff consider assessment an integrative process that involves course outcomes, progression through the General Education **Core** goals, and, finally, results from a specific program of study (**14FE 1.1 and 2.1**).

**At the course level, the College offers transparent and clearly articulated statements of student-learning outcomes; expectations for institutional benchmarks are set through the College’s General Education Core goals and their assessment plans (14 FE 1).** Each of the 850 courses in the College follows a standard course outline of record, (known at the College as **ACT 335 forms**), that lists the course description, pre-requisites, measurable student-learning outcomes for that course, sequence of topics, learning activities, and course assessment plan (also known as “the course evaluation method”). For a sample excerpt from a course outline form, see Figure 14.3. Learning outcomes are available to the entire College community; students may link to the standard course outline directly from the course description on the web and portal. Faculty

Overview: Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes		
Program	Core	Course
Approach: Academic Program Review Process Including Annual and 5-Year Reviews	Approach: A Modified Institutional Portfolio	Approach: Targeting Student Success Every Year
Program Assessment Plans include <b>Student Learning Outcomes</b> and identify measures used for assessment	<b>Thirteen Core Learning Goals</b> each with specific outcomes mapped to courses and programs	<b>ACT 335 Standard Course Forms</b> with measurable outcomes, identification of General Education goals and integrated assessment plans
<b>Academic Program Advisory Committees</b> which include outside experts who advise selected programs on trends and improvements	Student Artifacts identified prior to assessment and mapped to and through programs	All-College Calendar of Course Assessment every course assessed regularly
<b>External Accreditation</b> are credentials for selected programs and license students	Plans with Rubrics Mapped to Outcomes faculty-designed measures for maximum information	Student Success Initiatives including Gatekeeper Course Monitoring, the Gateway Academy and Blackboard Analytics
<b>Academic Program Review</b> which include SWOT analysis, curricular review, external advising, transfer partner review, and evidence of student learning	Assessment Activities of faculty-driven assessment within general education courses	New and Modified Courses with mandatory assessment plans to create a culture of assessment

Figure 14.2: Integrated Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes. The assessment of SLOs is integrated across courses, the General Education Core, and programs, as this chart, depicted in full on the external College website, illustrates.



members expect that 70% of students will meet a given course outcome. For courses designated as General Education or Core courses, the learning outcomes that meet a specific Core goal are also noted on the course outline form. Each semester, faculty members submit course syllabi for division-level review against the course outline; additionally, each semester the Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment audits selected non-program or non-Core courses by emailing the instructors to review the course syllabus and planned assessment activities. Finally, **a calendar of course assessment sets a regular and repeatable College-wide schedule for course assessment, with highly enrolled and Core courses assessed annually and program-specific and other courses assessed on a rolling, three- to five-year basis (14FE 2.3).**

Similarly, **each of the 82 degree programs and 42 certificate programs at the College has specific program-level outcomes for students, which are published in the course catalog and on the College website (14FE 1).** As part of recent assessment initiative, all programs of study are beginning to use curriculum maps to show how each course in a program of study introduces or reinforces a program outcome. Ancillary program maps also demonstrate how a specific program fulfills the General Education Core requirements of the College, either through specific Core electives or by threading Core goals throughout multiple courses. Whether Core goals are course-related or embedded throughout a program, the program map designates which student work should be used for the eventual assessment of each goal **(14FE 1.2)**. Finally, each program must have a specific assessment plan on file with the Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment. **In this way, the College ensures that both program outcomes and Core outcomes are integrated with each other and support student learning (14FE 1.1).**

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:		
LEARNING OUTCOMES	LEARNING ACTIVITIES *Activities for Core Competency Assessment	EVALUATION METHODS
1. Read critically. (Core Goal 1.3)	Lecture Discussion Essays	Write 15 to 20 Pages of Edited Prose Final Paper Using Outside Sources Collected and Scored to Assess Core Goals*
2. Evaluate a writing task for purpose, audience, context, and point of view. (Core Goal 1.1a and 1.2)	Lecture Discussion Essays	Write 15 to 20 Pages of Edited Prose Final Paper Using Outside Sources Collected and Scored to Assess Core Goals*
3. Use a rhetorical strategy appropriate to the writing task to address a topic. (Core Goal 1.1a and 1.2)	Lecture Readings Discussion Peer Review Essays	Write 15 to 20 Pages of Edited Prose Final Paper Using Outside Sources Collected and Scored to Assess Core Goals*

Figure 14.3: Sample Course Outline (ACT 335 form) with SLOs. An excerpt from the English 101 (Composition I) course outline form shows outcomes, linked Core goals, and the course-embedded assignment to be used later for assessment purposes.

Strong transfer and core-to-core agreements demonstrate the strength of the College's program outcomes and **their consonance with the standards of other institutions of higher education (14FE 1.3)**. With more than 28 dual admissions agreements guaranteeing graduated students who maintain a specific grade point average admission to four-year schools and 17 program-to-program agreements with partner institutions, the College ensures that graduates of its programs are well qualified. The College's 10 externally accredited programs also provide external endorsement of student learning in those programs.

**The College's assessment plan**, which originated in 1997 as the "Outcomes Assessment Plan and is currently titled "Our Commitment to Assessment," documents an organized, systematic, and sustainable assessment process. The plan, which is **jointly revised every three years** by the Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, describes how faculty collaborate with the administrative staff to

support assessment and how planning decisions results from assessment data. **Most importantly, the plan provides clear and realistic guidelines** for ongoing assessment at the College (14FE 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5). Faculty members in each discipline assess student learning regularly, with **outcomes of gatekeeper and Core courses assessed on an annual basis. Each year, a program coordinator assesses selected program outcomes, in accordance with the plan on file**, and reports on those outcomes via the Program Annual Review. **Every five years, program coordinators report on all program outcomes as part of the Academic Program Review (14FE 2).** The Assessment Committee assembles an annual progress report on assessment at the College at the end of each academic year, which details both the work of the committee and progress against the College's assessment plan, insofar as that progress relates to student learning (14FE 2.1). The College's assessment plan appears as Appendix 14.2.

**Evidence from those assessments is posted on an internal portal and shared with the Office of Academic Affairs, the Office of Institutional Research, academic deans, and program coordinators.** Data from SLOs may become part of the Institutional Effectiveness Matrix. **The Office of Academic Affairs in program review uses institutional results, in annual budget planning, and by the Office of Institutional Research (14FE 4).** An online SharePoint repository managed by the Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment houses assessment data. **Not only does the repository store program data, it also allows faculty and staff to share updated information on institutional and Core assessment (14FE 4).** First, SharePoint pages link directly to all program assessment reports (14FE 3). The site also displays links to direct evidence of student learning and Core assessment materials, including sample assessment plans, rubrics, sample student artifacts, descriptions of assessment activities, evidence of student learning, and even "closing the loop" information. Finally, the repository displays links to relevant institutional evidence, such as gatekeeper course assessment results, Student Success Initiative data, and other benchmarks.

### Self-Study Methodology

During the Self-Study, Working Group 10 investigated how assessment of student learning ties to the mission, strategic plan, and resources of the College, and the College sustains that assessment over time. Working Group 10 also researched how assessment results are used for making improvements at the course, core, program, and institutional levels. The Group explored whether the College is effective encouraging, recognizing, and valuing faculty and staff efforts to assess student-learning outcomes, and how those outcomes are communicated to the public, to students, to faculty, and throughout the College administration. Working Group 10 examined standard course outlines, assessment plans at the course, core, program and institutional level, assessment results posted on the portal, committee minutes, program reports, and other documents to arrive at its findings. Key faculty and staff involved in assessment were also interviewed.

## Findings and Discussion

### Strengths

The Working Group found that the College supports ongoing, sustainable, and improving assessment practices. **In particular, the Working Group found that the College's program-level assessment processes, structures, and reporting are very strong.** A rigorous academic program review process has resulted in the development of new academic programs, improvement in existing programs, deletions of no longer relevant or viable programs, and new budget expenditures to meet current and future program needs. Used also as a vehicle for reporting the results of assessment of student learning at the program and course-levels, the findings of each **Academic Program Review (APR)** are shared across the College's governance structure, culminating with the Board of Trustees. Annual Program Academic Reports replaced the Program Report Card process in AY13-14 and included a thorough curriculum mapping process. (For a sustained discussion of the APR process see Chapter 2; for a sample APR see Appendix 2.1.). All program coordinators use new curricular maps to designate when outcomes are introduced to students and when those outcomes are reinforced within a program of study. The program assessment process ensures academic integrity and continued assessment of SLOs.

The Working Group found that reporting on course assessment takes place primarily as a part of program and Core assessment. (See the previous discussion of Core assessment in the chapter on Standard 12). However, gateway course assessment, reported as part of the Student Success Initiative, supplements course assessment efforts. The College also monitors student performance by student cohort by measuring retention and success rates in developmental and first-year courses. All courses that are designated as Core, exist to support a program, or are part of the Student Success effort, are currently being assessed regularly and consistently. The College is now developing a process for reporting on the assessment of the approximately 200 courses that are neither part of a program nor part of the Core. In short, processes, policies and procedures for assessing student learning are firmly in place and assessment at the program and course levels are now part of the annual work of the faculty and deans.

Additional assessment initiatives have been implemented since the 2010 PRR. An approved set of assessment responsibilities for student learning outcomes has been identified for each of the key units of the College, such as Student Affairs and Information Technology. Bi-weekly Assessment open forums to raise institutional awareness of assessment were implemented in AY 13-14. A summary report of each session is shared with faculty via email and the assessment blog. Appendix 14.3 contains a representative selection of materials used in Student Learning Outcomes assessment and contains course outlines, sample rubrics, sample student work, course assessment data, and "closing the loop" materials.

**The Working Group affirmed that the College continually uses student learning assessment data to improve student learning and support institutional change (14FE 4 and 5). Figure 14.4 shows evidence of improvements made at the course, Core, program, and institutional levels as a direct result of SLO assessment.**

Level	Results of Assessment	Improvements Made	Examples and Discussion	Location of Evidence
Course	Students not meeting course outcomes in MAT 010, MAT 161, MLT, ACC 111, ENG010 and BIO 131	Identified strategies to improve student learning	MAT 010 redesigned from topic approach to conceptual, discovery approach; MAT161, MLT, and ACC111 added supplemental instruction; ENG 010 added supplemental PLATO instruction; BIO added a placement exam;	Course Assessment SharePoint site
Course	Some students not meeting outcomes benchmarks in gatekeeper courses	Added faculty support for research and inquiry into course redesign modeled on the method developed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching	Gateway Academy promotes course-based research and faculty development through assessment. Courses participating include ENG 011, MAT 011, ECO 121, CJS 100, EDU 100, HIS 205, ENG 101, ENG 102, CIS 110, HIS 101, HIS 102, MAT 101	Gateway Academy Review and IR Report
Course	Faculty reported difficulty in collecting course-level assessment data	Adopted software to allow faculty access to user-friendly, course-level analytics	Extensive Blackboard Analytics for Learn training promotes a higher level of self-sufficiency in data collection and assessment	Office of the Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment
Course	Audit revealed a lack of consistency in the standard course outlines	Revised course outline forms to update prerequisites, re-word outcomes to be measurable, and incorporate assessment plans	Revised 800 course outline (ACT 335) forms and deleted 126 courses as a result of the revisions; updated outcomes in all College publications to ensure consistency and integrity and published all course outline forms to SharePoint for in-house and public view	Office of the Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment
Course	Discipline updates and best practices scan revealed the need for course changes	Modified classes and curriculum as needed	Advertising was changed to Advertising and Promotion; the Medical Assisting Practicum increased from 3 to 5 credits; ENG 101 aligned language of course description with learning outcomes and current best practices in College Composition pedagogy	Office of Academic Affairs/Minutes of English Committee meetings
Course	Student surveys noted inconsistencies in the student experience across course offerings	Validate learning outcomes through random syllabi review	Submission of syllabi has been required for several years. Effective fall 2014, a random number of courses are selected each semester for syllabi review. IR selected the courses, which represent approximately 10% of all sections.	Office of Institutional Research/ Office of the Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment
Course	Faculty and staff feedback in Distance Education Committee noted lack of parity in online student services	Improve online student success support	Added online services through Tutorial Services; Blackboard collaborate. Today all student services are provided online, as well as on each campus.	DEC and ITACC minutes
Course	Review of credit hour policy and Virtual Campus development pointed to need for evaluating online student engagement	Developed an Instructional Engagement Matrix and Distance Education Rubric for Course Assessment (DERCA)	DERCA and Matrix guide all online course development, design, and revision	DEC and ITACC minutes

Level	Results of Assessment	Improvements Made	Examples and Discussion	Location of Evidence
Course	Virtual Campus consultant recommended a consistent template for online course offerings	Implemented Universal Blackboard shell and scheduled annual review as charge of DEC and ITACC	DEC facilitated full faculty involvement in the planning and implementation	Consultant's report/ DEC and ITACC minutes
Core	At various faculty meetings, faculty reported problems with Core application process	Improved faculty communication and training about Core application process	Developed Core "boot camps" for faculty putting forward courses for Core consideration; revised the Curriculum Committee pathway and communicated revisions during Faculty meetings	Office of the Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment/ Curriculum Committee minutes
Core	Lower than expected results in selected Core Goal 1 outcomes	Created additional faculty and student support materials	ENG created semester long workshops; developed a series of course-related support materials, such rubrics, assignments, and FAQ sheets ENG created an Open Education Content site to support students and faculty;	English Department Minutes of the Freshman Committee
Core	Audit of course substitution patterns revealed need for Core course adjustments	Added and deleted courses with core designation	Request to change ECO 121 and 122 combination to meet core goal 11 to ECO 122 alone – core goal 11.2 and 11.1, 11.3; Additional core courses recruited based on course substitution requests for core. Several courses requested removal of Core Goal 5 – information literacy based on a review of student learning outcomes, assignments and analysis of data	Office of the Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment/ Curriculum Committee minutes
Core	Lack of student options to meet Goal 12, sustainability	Infusion of sustainability efforts across campus and as a common thread across all programs.	Twelve courses now include this outcome. New courses include GLG 125 The Science of Climate Change and GEO 235 Sustainable Climate Communities, which sponsors the Sustainability Lecture Series.	Climate Action Plan Goal #3 plan/ Curriculum Committee minutes
Program	Implementation of the new Core made some programs non-compliant	Adjusted the curriculum review process to include a revised Program map for core compliance	New programs and programs requesting modifications must submit a revised core map. Additionally during AY 13-14 all existing programs were required to update the core maps which were then made available to students on the program of study website.	General Education Core pages
Program	Program reviews lacked data to support proposed changes	Refocused and redesigned Academic Program Review (APR) process	The Academic Program Review process has been modified each year to reflect current trends and assessment. This process was revised in AY 13-14. The use of Program Analytics Reports for historical evidence, connections to strategic initiatives, focus group results, and pathways create an APR that is more forward looking. Analysis and assessment of student learning outcomes is included in the new format.	Program Assessment SharePoint site



Level	Results of Assessment	Improvements Made	Examples and Discussion	Location of Evidence
Programs	PARs or APRs proposed new course development	Added courses	Math added a new Proof's course; CIS added 3D modeling course; Culinary Arts Institute added Introduction to Food Service and Bakery and Pastry Arts III; COM requested two new internship courses and started to look towards a closer, collaborative arrangement with the Electronic Game Design and Simulation program that resulted in three new course requests.	Program Assessment SharePoint site
Program	SGA "top 10" noted need for programs at locations other than Central	Expanded programs to additional locations	Expanding the Honors program to West Campus; expanding ESL to the former Norristown Welcome Center	SGA minutes/ Curriculum Committee minutes
Program	APR and advisory board review noted need for modifications	Modified courses and programs	CADD program changed from degree to certificate; Biological Sciences renamed as Life Sciences; Fine Arts changed AA to AFA	Program Assessment SharePoint site/ Curriculum Committee minutes
Program	Enrollment reviews during APRs noted declines	Deleted courses and programs	Auto Tech, Biological Sciences, and Environmental Science programs deleted; digital design course deleted – deletions align courses with catalogue	Program Assessment SharePoint site/ Curriculum Committee minutes
Program	Student Affairs review provided evidence of inadequate advising in certain disciplines	Devised new advising plan for disciplines	Fine Arts and Marketing added faculty advising; specific advisors assigned to specific disciplines	Office of Academic Affairs
Program	APRs revealed programs requiring more than 60 credits	Reduced credits in certain degree programs	Math, Social Sciences, and Marketing reduced credits needed for degree	Program Assessment SharePoint site/ Curriculum Committee minutes
Institutional	Data from the Institutional Effectiveness Model identified an achievement gap for minority men	Implemented the Minority Male Mentoring Program	The Minority Male Mentoring Program was created to address the achievement and persistence gaps with African American male students; in 2013 scaled to include minority females and the Hispanic population	Student Success Initiative reports
Institutional	Students not progressing to completion according to benchmarks	Redesigned the student entry process to more effectively move students from connection to entry to progress to completion.	Piloted the redesigned process from inquiry, through admission, through testing, through advising and registration to ensure accurate placement and registration in appropriate courses	Office of Student Affairs/Student Entry Redesign Presentations
Institutional	CCSSE results showed need for faculty training in student engagement	Added professional development opportunities	Last CCSSE results were introduced at Opening Day in a session that brainstormed with faculty for areas of improvement.	Opening Day 2010 and General Faculty Meeting 11/18/13

Figure 14.4: Evidence of Use of Data. Evidence of improvements made at the course, Core, program, and institutional levels as a result of SLO assessment

## Opportunities

**Working Group 10 concluded that the administration's distributed approach to both Core and course assessment, while important for providing opportunities for gathering baseline data and for acclimating the faculty to assessment practices, has resulted in a lack of clear lines of responsibility for Core and course-level data collection.** Centralizing some elements of the process might provide a more transparent clearinghouse for the collection, documentation, and distribution of assessment data. Additional leadership in each discipline could add transparency and consistency to the data collection process. Working Group 10 found that the College has an opportunity, now that assessment has become customary and ongoing, to improve how it recognizes faculty and staff efforts to assess student learning at the course level. The College also needs to reward faculty-led assessment initiatives reliably, with either some pay or a workload reduction. Additional ways to recognize faculty for creativity and innovation in course assessment should be explored. **The Working Group suggested that the College, using as a model the best practices it has established in program-level assessment, should continue to refine its assessment of Core- and course-level student learning outcomes.**

**Overall, the Working Group thought that communication about assessment could be further supported.** Non-program assessment plans need to be shared more broadly and updated annually. And while course, program, and Core outcomes are clearly published, they are not, in all cases, clearly communicated, particularly to the part-time faculty. The faculty is still struggling with the burden of course-level assessment in terms of when and how to assess. The Working Group found some confusion about what assessment is required on an ongoing basis. The suggested appointment of assessment ambassadors may offer faculty a better sense of structure among all levels of assessment and may facilitate consistent communication. **The College needs to manage concerns about assessment to ensure that all are conducting assessment effectively. In particular, communication of the assessment process should be strengthened.**

## Suggestions for Improvement

**14.a The Working Group suggested that the College, using as a model the best practices it has established in program-level assessment, should continue to refine its assessment of Core- and course-level student learning outcomes.**

(Theme 3: Continuous Institutional Renewal)

**14.b The College needs to manage any concerns about assessment to ensure that all stakeholders are conducting assessment effectively. In particular, communication of the assessment process should be strengthened.**

(Theme 2: Communication and Collaboration)



# Suggestions and Work Plan

## Work Plan to Address Each Self-Study Suggestion

*(Items listed include all progress since the initial Working Group findings in January 2014)*

No.	Suggestion	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
1.a.	The College should consider strategies for documenting ongoing discussions about mission review and build the results of those discussions into its long-term strategic planning process.	1. The President offered to convene a new advisory group, the Strategic Planning Advisory Council, to monitor the implementation of the Mission and facilitate Mission review starting in Fall 2015.	Office of the President	AY14-15
		2. The four All-College Governance Committees are slated to complete a mission review early in the Fall 2015 semester, in concert with five-year strategic planning conversations.	Shared Governance Committees	AY15-16
		3. The strategic planning process will incorporate advisory group suggestions, feedback from the governance committees and Self-Study suggestions.	Office of the President	AY15-16
1.b.	The College should further describe how its Core goals evolved from its mission, values, and strategic planning statements.	1. The All-College Curriculum Committee reviews the Core and the Assessment Committee's Core report as part of its charges for AY14-15. A discussion of the relationship between the Core and the mission, values, and philosophy statements will be part of this conversation.	All-College Curriculum Committee	AY14-15
		2. Findings from the Curriculum Committee discussion will be passed to the new Advisory Group for discussion and integration to the mission review and strategic planning process, scheduled for AY15-16.	Office of Academic Affairs	AY14-15
2.a.	The College should continue to optimize its resource allocation methodologies, particularly those that advance innovation.	1. Many units within the College have devised new methods for optimizing resource management. For example, as part of the Testing Center's initiatives to expand services to the community and generate revenue, the College is partnering with the Montgomery County Literacy Network (MCLN) to provide GED (General Education Development) testing to the participants in their GED preparation program at the Central Campus. The Athletics Department sponsored an expanded summer camp program in June through August 2014, which generated \$20,000, \$5,000 over the budgeted target of \$15,000.	All Units	Ongoing

No.	Suggestion	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
2.b.	<i>The College should provide greater access to data used to support the planning process, as relevant and appropriate to an individual's position, and provide training in data analysis, as needed.</i>	1. All College units have renewed efforts to publicize important data internally to effect change. For example, the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management sends out weekly, and in some cases, daily, bulletins reporting student interest, applications, enrollment patterns, and program persistence. The Office of Academic Affairs now sends out data to program coordinators (known locally as program "report cards") with accompanying narrative in order to contextualize program results.	All Units	Ongoing
		2. The Office of Academic Affairs has begun to monitor trends in enrollment by course with a "Fill Ratio Report," developed within the Colleague Reporting and Operating Analytics (CROA) environment. Previously to AY14-15, advisors would discover that a specific course is filled and would contact the pertinent academic area to discuss opening a new section of the filled course. Now, however, advising uses CROA to report a filled course and an automated process allows new sections to open much more quickly. This process allows advising to respond rapidly to student enrollment needs.	Office of Academic Affairs	Ongoing
		3. The Provost has created an Academic Affairs Dashboard which will permit Academic Deans and Coordinators the ability to retrieve real-time data for course enrollments and credit hours, course success and retention rates, completion of programs, as well of other success metrics which will assist with academic planning and assessment	Office of Academic Affairs	Fall 2014
		4. BlackBoard Analytics permits users to turn data about student enrollment, completions, high School applications and matriculation into the College, course drop/withdrawal rates, as well as other student-centered data, into information that can be used by decision-makers throughout the College to make informed decisions as well as demonstrate ongoing improvement.	Division of Information Technology and Campus Services	Spring 2015
3.	<i>The Office of Finance and Administration should continue to refine its planning processes to allow for nimble long-term forecasting, particularly in the areas of position management and deferred maintenance.</i>	1. Since the Working Group reported its findings, the College has approved the Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program. The resulting restructuring will enable the College to address operating gaps and eventually savings generated will allow the College to restore balanced operational budgets.	Board of Trustees	Through AY15-16
		2. The Office of Finance and Administration implemented the Budget Module of the College's ERP system. The module supports all of the functions needed to set up a new or to modify an existing budget. This automated process facilitates the generation of new budgets informed by historical data.	Office of Finance and Administration	Through FY14-15



No.	Suggestion	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
4.	<i>The College should ensure that new initiatives and policy revisions are undertaken within timeframes that allow faculty, students, support staff, and administrators to communicate and collaborate in an effective manner.</i>	1. <i>The formation by the President of the Shared Governance Committee (initially the Committee on Committees) provided greater coordination among the All-College Committee chairs and their administrative staff members. The Shared Governance Committee will review meeting calendars, to ensure that review dates match up well with administrative deadlines.</i>	<i>President and Shared Governance Committee chairs</i>	<i>Completed</i>
		2. <i>The circulation of a monthly Governance newsletter helped clarify and communicate governance agenda.</i>	<i>Office of Academic Affairs</i>	<i>Completed</i>
		3. <i>All-College Committee chairs redesigned agendas to be readable when email is opened and eliminated attachments. They also oversee a meeting pathway site.</i>	<i>Office of Academic Affairs with Shared Governance Committee Chairs</i>	<i>Completed</i>
		4. <i>The Provost provides time for policy revision discussions to take place during General Faculty meetings; Governance Committee chairs lead updates on policy issues. The Provost also organizes interactive focus groups as well as "deep dive" discussion groups around new initiatives.</i>	<i>Office of Academic Affairs with Shared Governance Committee Chairs</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
5.	<i>The College should strengthen processes that support administrative continuity and institutional knowledge management, including those that document current practices and systematize the way transitions are handled.</i>	1. <i>The Office of Academic Affairs continues to update its Operations Manual to document process workflow. In addition, it is reviewing the comprehensiveness of the manual to identify and create additional operational guidelines, as needed.</i>	<i>Office of Academic Affairs</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
6.	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
7.	<i>The College should enhance its communication processes in order to make assessment data easier to</i>	1. <i>The Office of Academic Affairs has created and implemented an "Academic Affairs Dashboard" which now permits Academic Deans, Academic Coordinators, and others to access real-time information in order to assist in planning and assessment for programs and courses.</i>	<i>Office of Academic Affairs</i>	<i>Completed</i>

No.	Suggestion	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
	<i>locate and retrieve, easier to interpret, and more widely available, as appropriate.</i>	2. Colleague Reporting and Operating Analytics (CROA) provides administrators throughout the College the ability to extract data from the Colleague system for analysis, planning, or assessment reporting. The implementation of expanded CROA access eliminates the need to ask IT to perform a complex database query.	Division of Information Technology and College Services	Ongoing
		3. The Starfish reporting and advising tool has been rolled out to teaching faculty as well as to advisors and counselors. Although its primary purpose is to track students who may be having academic and behavioral issues in the classroom or in life, the software has the additional effect of sharing faculty data on classroom performance with students. Access to this information early in the semester, weeks before midterms, will help students make changes that will positively affect their academic performance and will offer students an additional self-assessment tool.	Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management	Ongoing
8.a.	<i>The College should assess the success of its new comprehensive Enrollment Management Plan and evaluate its ability to improve the prediction and management student enrollment and persistence.</i>	1. Individual accountabilities for implementing the Enrollment Management Plan, with metrics for success, are being incorporated into individual goals via the Performance Management System (PMP).	Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management	Ongoing
		2. Based on annual assessment, the Enrollment Management work plan now includes expanding the adult market, better serving, the Hispanic market, and improving high-school dual enrollment pathways.	Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management	AY14-14; reassessed annually in May
8.b.	<i>The College should continue to strengthen student readiness and completion strategies by consolidating cohort assessment across various student interventions.</i>	3. Consistent cohort assessment reports were formulated in July of 2014 with the assistance of the IT team. The reports assess retention, persistence, success and graduation rates. In addition, reports were designed to identify and list students on academic probation and suspension, and calculate students who are enrolled in 12+ credits, 15+ credits and the overall average of the cohort.	Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, supported by the Division of Information Technology	Completed
9.a	<i>The College should evaluate the effectiveness of its new Advising Redesign, particularly to ensure that the Starfish</i>	1. The Early Alert portion of the Starfish system moved out of the pilot phase into full implementation for the Fall of 2014. Within the Starfish system, the members of the SSRT team are able to respond to the SSRT alerts directly.	Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management	Completed

No.	Suggestion	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
	<i>system serves all students well going forward.</i>	<p>2. Feedback from faculty and advisors is now being incorporated into the system for process improvements. All users were surveyed in Spring 2014 (faculty, advisors, students, other support areas). Presentations to faculty at Opening Day and General Faculty meetings have resulted in additional suggestions for improvements and surveys will be used again after the mid-term progress surveys to gather additional feedback.</p> <p>3. The first midterm grades were entered through Starfish in the Spring of 2014. Submission of midterm grades by faculty then resulted in outreach to students by advisors and counselors; this process moves out of the pilot phase and into full implementation during the Summer of 2014. The Provost is reviewing information about the midterm grading and comparing outcomes to begin to assess this new software program.</p> <p>4. Metrics for Starfish success have been established and include improvements on Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, CCSSE, and SENSE, as well as student retention, persistence, and completion.</p>	<p>Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management</p> <p>Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and Office of Academic Affairs</p> <p>Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management with support from Institutional Research</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>AY14-15</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
9.b	<i>Student Affairs should create a more robust Career Services office across all campuses and locations to help students with experiential learning, internships, and career pathways.</i>	<p>1. The Office of Career Services is extending its scope. For example, the Coordinator of Career Services expanded the number of "Recruiters on Campus" events to 4 each semester to provide area employers additional opportunities to recruit students into jobs and internships. In addition, it increased employer participation to 100 recruiters during April 2014 Career Expo. The Coordinator of Internships and Job Placement developed and promoted additional internships and shadowing opportunities to provide experiential learning and information about various career fields.</p>	Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment	Ongoing
10.a	<i>The College should continue to monitor the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty and prioritize full-time hiring, as appropriate, to strive to meet this ratio.</i>	<p>1. The College should explore allocating selected faculty lines now open as a result of the Voluntary Retirement Incentive Plan to divisions that are striving to meet their full-time to part-time faculty ratio.</p>	Office of Academic Affairs	Ongoing

No.	Suggestion	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
10.b	<i>The Deans of the academic divisions should strive for an equitable process when determining faculty committee service, particularly for service that is appointed, not elected. Faculty leaders should also support processes that ensure that all full-time faculty members in each division share service</i>	1. <i>Each faculty member should keep an updated listing of hours of Committee Service and should review committee service with their Dean every three years, per the Faculty contract.</i>	<i>Office of Academic Affairs</i>	<i>AY14-15</i>
10.c	<i>The College should determine whether and how professional development offerings for faculty members contribute to student success.</i>	1. <i>“Transforming Your Talents,” the College’s professional development series in AY13-14 and 14-15, is focused on collaborative learning, course design, equity in the classroom, and assessment.</i>	<i>Office of Academic Affairs</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
		2. <i>The Spring 2014 Faculty Professional Development Day focused on Student Success Initiatives and was led by faculty, for faculty.</i>	<i>Office of Academic Affairs</i>	<i>Completed</i>
10.d	<i>While the Faculty Diversity Fellows program has been successful, the College should explore the feasibility of expanding the program and creating additional measures to increase diversity in the faculty hiring, promotion, and evaluation process.</i>	1. <i>The College will explore pro-active faculty recruitment to the Diversity Fellows Program. The Deans will explore cultivating part-time minority faculty for consideration as Faculty Diversity Fellows.</i>	<i>Office of Academic Affairs with the Director of Diversity Initiatives</i>	<i>AY14-15</i>
11.a.	<i>The College should supplement its process for determining course offerings by implementing systematic methods for capturing student input. The College should then use this information to inform scheduling (that is, what,</i>	1. <i>In response to student feedback, waitlists were opened in some disciplines to allow students to indicate interest in a particular class offered at a particular time.</i>	<i>Office of Academic Affairs, supported by the Office of the Registrar</i>	<i>Spring/Summer 2014 (for Fall 2014 registration)</i>
		2. <i>The Office of Student Affairs is piloting a new Student Educational Planning tool that allows students to work with their advisors to map out their program’s schedule semester- by-semester. Coordinators, working with the</i>	<i>Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>

No.	Suggestion	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
	where, when, and how courses are offered).	Office of Academic Affairs, should explore how to use this data to predict future course need.	Management, with the Office of Academic Affairs	
11.b	The College should form strategic relationships with those partners that have shown a consistent pattern of successful transfer, including degree completion, for MCCC students.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The College continues to monitor its partnerships and has started to look more strategically at its transfer partners, taking successful degree completion into consideration during renewal conversations.</li> <li>2. The College has secured one, and is exploring additional, reverse transfer agreements with strong transfer partners to solidify relationships with these institutions.</li> </ol>	<p>Office of Academic Affairs and Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management</p> <p>Office of Academic Affairs and Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management</p>	<p>AY14-15</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
12.a	The College should gauge the impact of both the General Education Core and State transfer requirements on program and course registration, student persistence, transferability, and student success and make revisions, as needed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Office of Institutional Research should design a way to collect cohort data on program and course registration, student persistence, transferability, and student success since the implementation of the Core in Fall 2011. That data should be correlated to TAOC-mandated changes and reported to the Assessment Committee for review.</li> </ol>	Office of Institutional Research	AY14-15
12.b	The Curriculum Committee should review each Core goal to clarify language, assist Core assessment, and evaluate the efficacy of the entire Core, making revisions, as needed, based on outcomes data, program needs, and faculty feedback.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The All-College Curriculum Committee took as one of its annual charges the review and overall assessment of the Core. The purpose of the review is to discover what elements of the Core learning outcomes the College has successfully met, to explore what elements of the Core learning outcomes present challenges, to review the impact of the Core on program designs, to consider the impact of the Core on Student Success in terms of progression and graduation, and to consider potential refinements to the Core based on the experience of implementing the new requirements. To that end, both Committees will seek input through the creation of multiple focus groups among faculty, students, and administrators, the reactivation of the Core Blackboard site, open Discussions of specific Core goals, hosted by the Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment. A general faculty meeting devoted to</li> </ol>	All-College Curriculum Committee supported by the Assessment Sub-Committee	AY14-15



No.	Suggestion	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
		discussing the Core is scheduled for February 2015, and a poll about potential options will circulate in April of 2015.		
		2. Using the results of the Assessment Committee's pilot study as a jumping off point, the Shared Governance Committees will host a number of focus groups, encourage the posting of feedback in the 2014 Core Review Blackboard site, and solicit direct communication with members of both Committees before using general faculty meetings in the spring to discuss the Core's strengths and potential opportunities for refinement.	Shared Governance Committees and Leadership Cabinet	AY15-16
13.a	The College should strive to ensure parity in advising, technology, student life, student services and course offerings across campuses.	1. The College Shuttle added service between the Culinary Arts Institute and Central Campus in Spring 2014.	Office of Information Technology and College Services	Completed
		2. The form that enables students to withdraw from a course has been put online and an automated process to gain the appropriate permissions has been established.	Office of Academic Affairs supported by Information Technology	Completed
		3. The All-College Distance Education Committee has been charged in AY14-15 to evaluate all College services and resources as used by Virtual Campus students. The committee researches service availability, reliability and accessibility and makes recommendations for improvements. The committee has also been charged with looking at similar services at peer institutions to identify improvement opportunities.	All-College Distance Education Committee and Director of the Virtual Campus.	AY 14-15
		4. The College actively collaborates with Student Government to identify and find solutions for improving the student experience.	Office of Information Technology and College Services, with SGA members	Ongoing
13.b	The College should find additional platforms to raise County and community awareness of its range of facilities and its breadth of cultural offerings.	1. The College presents the Lively Arts Series that offers County Community residents and the College Community exposure to exceptional artists in dance, music, theater, scholars, and innovators.	Office of Cultural Affairs	Ongoing
		2. The College established a Production Internship Program as part of its Lively Arts Series. It is designed to expose our students to how the industry operates backstage and supports internal/external events on both campuses, while exposing them to exceptional artists and designers, as well	Office of Cultural Affairs, Theatre Arts Program, Communications	Ongoing

No.	Suggestion	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
		as, with our production vendors. The experience gained is also part resume building.	Program, Office of Information Technology	
		3. The College established a Technical Theatre Training Program at Eisenhower Middle School. This program is designed to create a pathway to the Norristown High School and then to the Theatre Arts Program here at Montgomery County Community College. This program can be blueprinted to reach students interested in pursuing a career in the performing arts.	Office of Cultural Affairs, Theatre Arts Program	Ongoing
		4. The College, through its Young Arts Explorers program, strategically presents programming designed to expose Montgomery County children to what the College offers in its STEM programs, Theatre Arts programs, Music programs and Dance programs.	Office of Cultural Affairs, Dean of STEM, Coordinators of Theatre Arts, Music, and Dance	Ongoing
		5. The College has developed partnerships with our production vendors to offer a pathway to internship opportunities working within the Performing Arts Industry.	Office of Cultural Affairs, Bauder Audio Systems, and Vision Arts Industry. Technical Group, Hyatt house, Plymouth Meeting	Ongoing
14.a	The Working Group suggested that the College, using as a model the best practices it has established in program-level assessment, should continue to refine its assessment of Core- and course-level student learning outcomes.	1. Distribute Core status report to all faculty and administrators.	Office of Academic Affairs	Completed August 2014
		2. Expand assessment team to support assessment calendar.	Office of Academic Affairs	Completed August 2014
		3. Create an e-form for submission of data, with directions and a video.	Assessment Team supported by Information Technology	Initially used May 2014. Being revised and updated for May 2015 reporting

No.	Suggestion	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
		4. Create an updated assessment process map.	Office of Academic Affairs, supported by Information Technology and Assessment Team, with faculty input.	Fall semester 2014
		5. Develop curriculum maps to document SLO assessment milestones.	Assessment Team, with faculty input	End of AY14-15
14.b	The College needs to manage concerns about assessment to ensure that all stakeholders are conducting assessment effectively. In particular, communication of the assessment process should be strengthened.	1. Publish a calendar of SLO assessment.	Office of Academic Affairs	Completed May 2014.
		2. Distribute annual assessment report to all faculty and Academic Affairs administrators	Office of Academic Affairs	Completed August 2014
		3. Add additional, descriptive information on the College's external assessment of student learning webpage.	Office of Academic Affairs	Completed August 2014
		4. Create an assessment handbook for faculty.	Assessment Team	End of AY14-15
		5. Publish a calendar of SLO assessment.	Office of Academic Affairs	Completed May 2014.

# Glossary

## Glossary of Terms, Acronyms, and College Usage

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**Academic Program Review:** Every five years, each program offered by the College undergoes a thorough review process, led by the program coordinator and the appropriate Dean, which includes an analysis of graduation and persistence rates, curricular updates, enrollment outlook, needs assessment, cost comparison, financial reporting with relation to College-wide ratio of tuition and fees to costs. The review culminates in the presentation of a report listing successes, issues, and suggested modifications to the Provost, the All-College Curriculum and Academic Affairs Committee, and, ultimately, the Board of Trustees.

**ACT 335 Forms:** Taking their name from the State legislation that requires them, ACT 335 forms are standard course outlines of record that contain a course description. The College has added information to the course outlines to assist parity across course sections, included pre-requisites, measurable student-learning outcomes for that course, sequence of topics, learning activities, and course assessment plan.

**Advising Redesign Initiative.** An initiative sponsored by the Student Affairs and Enrollment Management division to reduce the perceived gap through a comprehensive redesign of the orientation, enrollment, and advising system at the College.

**All-College Curriculum and Academic Affairs Committee:** One of the four governance committees of College, charged with reviewing all new curricular matters, including new courses, new programs, modified courses/programs, deleted courses/programs, academic program reviews, academic calendar, and other issues/policies. It is the Committee's responsibility to ensure academic integrity and that any proposal brought forward for consideration is in line with the Mission of the College.

**All-College Distance Education Committee:** One of the four governance committees of College, charged with assuring quality in the College's distance education programs (including technological changes, software and hardware, staff and faculty training, academic standards, etc.), reviewing and recommending policies and practices, providing a forum for constituent discussion, advising constituents of concerns, and resolving problems in conjunction with other College committees or offices.

**All-College Governance Committees:** Montgomery County Community College has four governing committees comprised of representatives from the faculty, student leadership, and administrative staff, that discuss policy, procedures, and curricular matters in order to make recommendations to the Leadership Cabinet. The Faculty Union Contract specifies the exact membership of each of these four governance committees. The four committees are the Curriculum and Academic Affairs Committee (Curriculum), the Distance Education Committee (DEC), the Information Technology Advisory Council (ITAC) and the Student Life Committee.

**All-College Information Technology Advisory Council:** One of the four governance committees of College, charged with addressing the following subjects as they relate to information technology: assuring the quality of the College's information technology, reviewing



and recommending policies and practices, advising constituents about information technology concerns, providing a forum for discussion and resolving problems in conjunction with other College committees and offices.

**All-College Student Life Committee:** One of the four governance committees of College , charged with ensuring that the College environment is responsive to student needs. Accordingly, the Committee reviews policies, develops proposals, and makes recommendations concerning matters that affect student life at the College, including proposed changes to student policies and procedures. The Committee studies, gathers information, conducts discussions and otherwise surveys the environment relating to their charge.

**APR:** Acronym for Academic Program Review

**Blackboard:** The College's Learning Management System.

**Blackboard Analytics:** The reporting tool associated with the Blackboard LMS.

**Budget Assumptions:** Expectations about how internal and external business conditions will develop and change.

**CAI:** Acronym for the Culinary Arts Institute

**CCSSE:** Acronym for Community College Survey of Student Engagement

**Center for Entrepreneurial Studies:** Refers to a resource at the College that offers a full range of business services for entrepreneurs including an extensive selection of credit and non-credit entrepreneurial courses, a business incubator facility with 10 furnished office suites and support services, external partnership agreements with the Small Business Administration (SBA) and SCORE – America's Counselors to Small Business and consulting services in vital business operational areas of Accounting, Legal, Marketing and Technology.

**Community College Survey of Student Engagement:** A nationally normed survey, administered to community college students, that asks questions that assess institutional practices and student behaviors that are correlated highly with student learning and student retention. It is a benchmarking instrument that establishes national norms on educational practice and performance, as well as a diagnostic tool for identifying areas of the student educational experience that may need improvement. (Definition paraphrased from [www.ccsse.org](http://www.ccsse.org).)

**Completion by Design:** A framework sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation that helps community colleges boost completion rates for most students, by focusing on comprehensive institutional transformation at scale. Groups of community colleges are engaged in a systematic process of inquiry and design. Their collective efforts are aimed at making systemic changes in policies, programs, and practices that strengthen pathways to completion for most students on their campuses (paraphrased from [www.completionbydesign.org](http://www.completionbydesign.org) ).

**Core (sometimes "the Core"):** College usage for either the thirteen General Education Core goals or for a course that fulfills the student learning outcomes for one or more of the Core goals.

**Critical Success Factors:** Benchmarks for the institutional achievement of strategic goals

**Colleague Reporting and Operational Analytics:** A transactional reporting tool that supports day-to-day data analysis.

**CROA:** Acronym for Colleague Reporting and Operational Analytics

**CSF:** Acronym for Critical Success Factor

**Culinary Arts Institute:** The College's newest location in Towamencin, PA, the Culinary Arts Institute offers associate's degrees and certificate in culinary arts, baking and pastry, as well as culinary enthusiast courses for lifelong learners.

**Curriculum:** College usage for the All-College Curriculum and Academic Affairs Committee

**DEC:** Acronym for All-College Distance Education Committee

**Decision Support Systems:** A general term for College technology that uses data analysis to assist in making informed decisions. Information Technology offers all decision makers tools that include user-driven reporting systems, performance dashboards, and sophisticated analytics.

**DERCA:** Acronym for Distance Education Rubric for Course Assessment

**Distance Education Rubric for Course Assessment:** This rubric is a tool designed by the All-College Distance Education Committee 1) to inform faculty of best practices of online education; 2) to enable faculty to review online courses with the goal of improving them; 3) to ensure compliance with external accreditation standards and 4) to provide the application of sound instructional design principles to online course design and development that benefits both the student learning experience and the faculty instruction experience.

**Drexel@MCCC:** Through a unique partnership between Drexel University, students can complete six face-to-face and three online Drexel bachelor's degrees at MCCC's Central or Virtual campus. Students can take the first two years of classes at the College, earn an Associate's degree, and then transfer to Drexel at MCCC to complete their degree.

**DSS:** Acronym for Decision Support Systems

**EDUCAUSE.** A nonprofit association of IT leaders and professionals committed to advancing higher education.

**Ellucian Colleague system:** The College's Enterprise Resource Planning software.

**Enterprise Resource Planning system:** A suite of software applications that integrates admissions, student, financial, and planning information. The College uses Ellucian's Colleague software as its ERP.

**ERP:** An acronym for Enterprise Resource Planning system.

**Foundational Skills Lab:** The Foundational Skills Lab, or Skills Lab, is a multimedia skills laboratory, and offers students the opportunity to brush up on and master basic skills (math, reading, and writing), to supplement their learning in a myriad of other subject areas (such as biology, chemistry, history/civics/government, geography, foreign language, psychology, and physics), and to receive standardized test preparation, most notably on the College's placement test (Accuplacer), as well as the Praxis, which is the teaching licensure exam.

**GASB:** Acronym for Governmental Accounting Standards Board.

**Gateway to College:** Although broadly the term refers to a national network designed for young adults ages 16-21 who are at risk for not completing high school, in this document the term refers to the program that supports the Gateway to College cohort. The College is one of only 43 Gateway to College programs in the country and partners locally with 16 area school districts and the Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board to help increase high school—and ultimately college—graduation rates.

**General Education Core Goals:** The thirteen areas of competency that every student at the College is required to acquire, either through instruction or practice. There are five “skills” goals—Communication Skills (written and oral), Analytic Skills, Quantitative Analysis, Computer Fluency, and Information Literacy. There are five “knowledge” goals—Intellectual Heritage, Aesthetic Sensibility and the Arts, Physical and Life Sciences, Behavioral and Social Sciences, and Exercise and Health Sciences. There are three “values” goals—Civic Responsibility, Sensitivity to Global Perspectives and Cultural and Social Diversity, and Ethical Reasoning and Behavior.

**Governmental Accounting Standards Board:** The GASB is the independent organization that establishes and improves standards of accounting and financial reporting for U.S. state and local government. (Definition quoted directly from <http://www.gasb.org/jsp/GASB/Page/GASBLandingPage&cid=1175804799024> )

**Health Sciences Center:** Name for the expanded and renovated Physical Education building, which is currently in its initial stages of development.

**IEM:** Acronym for Institutional Effectiveness Model

**Intrusive advising:** An advising model that aims to create a system of intervention strategies that mandates advising contact and particularly targets students who might not otherwise seek advising.

**Institutional Effectiveness Model:** The Institutional Effectiveness Model, produced by the Office of Institutional Research, is a spreadsheet that collates data from multiple College sources and charts that data against the strategic plan and selected external benchmarks Examples of data sources that inform the Institutional Effectiveness Model include: enrollment and credit hour figures, retention information, gateway course success, the results of nationally normed surveys (Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, the Community Perception Survey, and the Survey of Entering Student Engagement), workforce development and grants costs and revenue, personnel investments,

college demographic, transfer data, and selected student learning outcomes. The President's Leadership Cabinet reviews the model quarterly.

**Institutional Effectiveness Review:** Quarterly meeting of the President and Vice-Presidents evaluate progress towards the CSFs, analyze success against metrics and discuss any required changes. These discussions are based on meetings that the Vice-Presidents have already held among the members of their own teams, so that Institutional Effectiveness Review make use of information from all levels of the College community. At the end of the academic year, each unit prepares an annual evaluation of strategic initiatives, including a Leadership Report Card and administrative evaluations, which assess the achievement of CSFs, academic outcomes, and related goals.

**Integrated Enrollment Services pathway:** Launched in 2011, the Integrated Enrollment Services pathway combines the functions of several areas—Admissions, Registration and Financial Aid/Payment, as well as the procurement of photo identification cards and parking stickers—into one convenient, streamlined system. Enrollment services assistants are cross-trained to provide a one-stop experience for enrolling students.

**ITAC:** Acronym for the All-College Information Technology and Advisory Council

**LASSI: Acronym for Learning and Study Strategies Inventory**

**Leah Meyer Austin Award:** Achieving the Dream's Leah Meyer Austin Award recognizes outstanding achievement in supporting student success through the creation of a culture of evidence, continuous improvement, systemic institutional change, broad engagement of stakeholders, and equity, with particular attention to low-income students, first-generation college students, and students of color. Austin, whose visionary leadership shaped the development of Achieving the Dream, is the former Senior Vice President for Program Development and Organizational Learning at the Lumina Foundation.

**Learning and Study Strategies Inventory:** A 10-scale, 80-item assessment of students' awareness about and use of learning and study strategies related to skill, will and self-regulation components of strategic learning. (Definition paraphrased from [http://www.hhpublishing.com/\\_assessments/lassi/](http://www.hhpublishing.com/_assessments/lassi/))

**Key Performance Indicator:** A quantifiable measure used by an institution to evaluate its success or the success of a particular activity.

**KPI:** Acronym for Key Performance Indicator

**Leadership Report Card:** An annual Vice-Presidential review that assesses the achievement of CSFs, academic outcomes, and related goals.

**Massive Open Online Course:** A model for delivering learning content online to any person who wants to take a course, with no limit on attendance (Definition paraphrased from [www.educause.edu](http://www.educause.edu)). The College has developed a MOOC about financial literacy.

**Matrix of Instructional Engagement (MIE):** A tool through which instructors map instructional hour equivalencies to online interactions. It also allows instructors to evaluate their use of best practices, types of online interaction, and use of assessment tools.

**MIE:** Acronym for Matrix of Instructional Engagement

**Minority Student Mentoring Initiative:** A program in which a student from an underrepresented cohort at the College is paired with a faculty or staff mentor with the goal of increasing persistence. Students are offered personal student advising, weekly study-skills and college survival skills workshops, and regular student focus groups.

**MOOC:** Acronym for Massive Open Online Course

**Moody's:** Short for Moody's Investors Service, Moody's Investors Service provides credit ratings, research, and risk analysis. According to its website, the firm's ratings and analysis track debt covering more than 115 countries, 11,000 corporate issuers, 21,000 public finance issuers, and 76,000 structured finance obligations. (Paraphrased from <https://www.moodys.com/Pages/atc.aspx> ).

**MSMI:** Acronym for Minority Student Mentoring Initiative.

**National Community College Benchmarking Project:** Sponsored by Johnson County Community College, the NCCBP has been collecting trend data since 2004. Its peer comparison tool lets colleges compare themselves to others on relevant benchmarks. (Definition paraphrased from <https://www.nccbp.org/content/benchmarks> ).

**National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE):** A private, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) national foundation dedicated to inspiring empowered financial decision making for individuals and families through every stage of life ([www.nefe.org](http://www.nefe.org)).

**NBC2:** Acronym for a \$2.7 million National Science Foundation funded Northeast Biomanufacturing Center and Collaborative.

**NCCBP:** Acronym for National Community College Benchmarking Project

**NEFE:** Acronym for National Endowment for Financial Education

**Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory.** This assessment measures student satisfaction and priorities, showing how satisfied students are as well as what issues are important to them ((Definition paraphrased from <https://www.noellevitz.com/student-retention-solutions/satisfaction-priorities-assessments/student-satisfaction-inventory> ).

**PAR:** Acronym for Program Analytics Report

**PASSHE:** Acronym for Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education



**Pearlstine Grant:** Named in honor of founding Trustee Gladys Pearlstine, these funds support Faculty Development at the College and are available by application.

**Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE):** The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE is comprised of 14 universities that are publicly owned and governed by the commonwealth: Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania; California University of Pennsylvania; Cheyney University of Pennsylvania; Clarion University of Pennsylvania; East Stroudsburg University; Edinboro University of Pennsylvania; Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Kutztown University of Pennsylvania; Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania; Mansfield University of Pennsylvania; Millersville University of Pennsylvania; Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania; Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania; and West Chester University of Pennsylvania. The (PASSHE) universities first originated as state normal schools and teacher colleges in Pennsylvania. Over time, the schools evolved from state normal schools to state teacher colleges to state colleges. On November 12, 1982, Act 188 was signed into law establishing the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. (Adapted from [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/institution\\_types/8713/pennsylvania\\_state\\_system\\_of\\_higher\\_education\\_\(passhe\)/522469](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/institution_types/8713/pennsylvania_state_system_of_higher_education_(passhe)/522469) )

**Performance Management Process:** A Human Resources system designed to provide an up-front, objective, mutually understood and acceptable basis for reviewing and discussing performance results. The process reduces misunderstanding between supervisors and the employee about performance results, specifies the employee's role in accomplishing things that are important for achieving the College's vision and mission, and helps the employee self-monitor progress by providing clear performance measurement criteria.

**PLATO online learning software:** *Plato* is instructional software for English, math, and reading students. The software presents a topic through interactive instruction. After the interactive instruction, students practice the topic. Students can check for understanding by completing a mastery test.

**PMP:** Acronym for Performance Management Process

**POWER Program:** Acronym for Partnership on Work Enrichment and Readiness. The POWER Program helps individuals in mental health recovery to successfully develop and reach their education and career goals through a two-credit college course that focuses on time management, basic computer skills, study skills, public speaking, college success skills, career assessment, resume writing and professionalism.

**President's Leadership Cabinet:** The President's senior staff, comprised of the Vice-Presidents, Associate Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors of HR. The Cabinet meets monthly.

**Pro forma:** A list of financial assumptions that will be integrated into a financial model or budget plan and is used in the creation of new initiatives.

**Program Analytics Report:** An annual analysis completed by the program coordinator that includes information about program status, enrollment outlook, and resource allocations (that is, needs assessment, cost comparison, financial reporting with relation to College-wide ratio of tuition and fees to costs). The program coordinator, with the support of the program faculty and

division Dean, submits the final report through an online SharePoint interface for review by the Office of Academic Affairs. After review, the Vice President of Academic Affairs returns approved PARs, which contain a one-year action plan, to the academic Dean and program coordinators for implementation. These annual reports are stored electronically and become the historical foundation of the five-year Academic Program Review (APR).

**SCS 101:** A course catalog abbreviation for Strategies for College Success. See entry below.

**SGA:** Acronym for the Student Government Association.

**SENSE:** Acronym for Survey of Entering Student Engagement

**Schuykill Riverfront Academic and Heritage Center:** Eventual name for 140 College Drive, West Campus, which the College acquired through a grant process and which is to be developed as regional hub of environmental science in partnership with the Schuylkill River Greenway Association.

**SSI:** Acronym for Student Success Initiative, not to be confused with the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory.

**Strategies for College Success (SCS 101):** a two-credit introduction to academic success strategies, including an orientation to college life, self- assessment and goal setting, study skills and time management, familiarization with college resources, and appreciation of cultural diversity. This course also includes a lab component of individualized academic advising throughout the semester by the course instructor. This course is mandatory for all students testing into two or more developmental courses as a result of the placement tests.

**Student Life:** College usage for the All-College Student Life Committee

**Student Success Initiative:** A compendium of all of the activities in the College that help students to be successful and reported and assessed via the College's Student Success Inventory.

**Survey of Entering Student Engagement:** An assessment of students in developmental and 100-level Math and English courses structured around six benchmarks: Early Connections, High Expectations and Aspirations, Clear Academic Plan and Pathway, Effective Track to College Readiness, Engaged Learning, and Academic and Social Support Network.

**Synoptix:** The College's financial reporting software

**TAACCCT 2:** Acronym for one of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career grant programs administered by the US Department of Labor.

**TAOC:** Acronym for Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee

**Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee:** The Pennsylvania organization that shapes transfer and articulation policies throughout the state. Members develop statewide program and course equivalency standards and agree to accept for transfer credits in all courses approved by its review process.

([https://www.pacollege-transfer.com/portals/6/PAFiles/TAOC\\_OptInAgreement\\_2010.pdf](https://www.pacollege-transfer.com/portals/6/PAFiles/TAOC_OptInAgreement_2010.pdf) )

**University Center:** A term used in aggregate to reference a set of agreements that allows the College's partner institutions to offer a variety of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees through an innovative public-private partnership and lease agreement. Also used to refer to a physical location, 95 South Hanover Street in Pottstown.

**VC:** Acronym for Virtual Campus

**VFA:** Acronym for Voluntary Framework of Accountability

**Virtual Campus:** The Virtual Campus is the College's singular, online platform for programs, courses, and support services delivery, all of which follow guidelines for best practices. It provides students with high-quality online programs taught by certified online instructors, in an environment that provides students with easy access to all College support services.

**Voluntary Framework of Accountability:** The principle accountability framework for community colleges with measures defined to encompass the full breadth of the community college mission and the diversity of students' goals and educational experiences (Definition paraphrased <http://vfa.aacc.nche.edu/about/Pages/default.aspx> ).



Montgomery County  
Community College

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